

Your Personal Development Program

What constitutes a personal development program? Top persuaders take multi-faceted approaches that include books, audios, seminars, and coaching. Any single method is incomplete; they all reinforce each other.

The basic foundation of a personal development program is books, just as high school is the foundation for college. Personal success expert Brian Tracy says, "If you can get yourself to read thirty minutes a day, you're going to double your income every year." Other findings suggest that if you read up on a particular topic for even just thirty to sixty minutes a day, it will take you only a few years to become an expert in that field. How do you spend your time? We know that millionaires watch less TV than those stuck in poverty. We know there is a powerful and direct connection between a personal growth program and income level.

Consider these painful numbers:

- 58 percent of the U.S. adult population never reads another book after high school.
- 42 percent of college graduates never read another book.
- 80 percent of U.S. families did not buy or read a book last year.
- 70 percent of U.S. adults have not been in a bookstore in the last five years.

A book tightly shut is but a block of paper.

—CHINESE PROVERB

While reading is often a beginner persuader's only approach, it is rarely effective by itself. Most people will not retain and apply all that they read, but reading does reinforce principles that you're working on in a seminar or with a coach. It's definitely time better spent than watching TV! The realistic truth about books—and believe me, as an author this is hard to say—is that the chances of finishing a book you have bought *and* applying one principle from it are less than one percent.

Audio programs are another perfect way to reinforce new ideas you're working on. Think of all the time you spend commuting. Don't waste away that time listening to the radio. Instead, turn your car into a workshop by listening to educational and motivational CDs.

Your income can grow only to the extent you do.

—HARV EKER

When you are focusing on your development, you are using your mind, your knowledge, and your skills. When you employ this trio of self-assets, you'll find previously untapped motivation. You'll develop a sense of urgency and direction that will bring you to higher levels of success. You can't be successful until you decide to explode out of your comfort zone and attempt the things that stretch and challenge you. Great persuaders learn to develop their hunger for knowledge and personal development. They want to grow, improve, and accomplish things they were not able to do in the past. When our capacity for growth and understanding increase, our self-esteem, optimism, and success also increase.

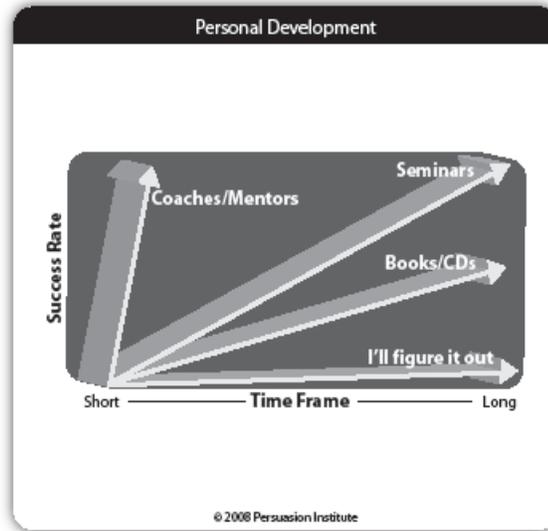
Seminars and workshops are one of the most effective ways to maximize your personal development program. They give you the chance to set aside two or three days for intensive study, to really zero in on specific topics and skills. Books and audios are a great start, but in a seminar or workshop setting you can take it to the next level. There is no substitute for going out of your way to meet with other individuals who are committed to the same ideals. A group of enthusiastic and energetic individuals who have been brought together by a common interest create a unique kind of synergy that cannot come about any other way. Oftentimes a seminar gives us just what we need to get the fire burning—to obtain new and exciting ideas, strategies, and techniques. Seminars and workshops are also tremendous opportunities for networking, which serve you long after you've left the classroom. Because of the value seminars and workshops offer that cannot be acquired in any other way, top persuaders make sure they incorporate them into their

annual planning, securing the necessary funds and arranging attendance often months in advance.

An even quicker, more powerful, and more cost-effective way to enhance personal development is to enlist the help of a mentor or coach. Great persuaders have multiple mentors and coaches. A mentor is an individual who has superior experience, knowledge, and awareness and who is committed to providing insight, advancement, and support to one's career or life. Why is mentoring the best option? Mentors and coaches have been there before, figured it all out, and can therefore spare you immeasurable time, money, frustration, and disappointment. They also bring detachment to the table, enabling them to give you truly objective and realistic advice.

Coaching has increased in popularity in recent years, and the results have been astounding. An obvious analogy is to compare coaching in life to coaching in sports. Take Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods as examples. Even with their innate gifts, they each committed enormous time, energy, and resources to working with the very best coaches. As serious athletes, they knew that in order to realize their fullest possible potential, they needed to surround themselves with knowledgeable, experienced, and wise coaches and mentors. Whatever your field is, do you take it seriously? If you took it as seriously as Michael Jordan does basketball, or Tiger Woods does golf, how much better would you be? The bottom line is, the research shows that mentors increase performance, lower turnover, increase job satisfaction, and—obviously—increase sales.

Take a look at the Personal Development graphic below, and you will see clearly how each type of personal development approach correlates with success—how soon you will see success and the level of that success



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