

**And the Winner
is ... YOU!**



Maxwell Dodd

“And the Winner
is...YOU!”

“And the Winner is...YOU!”

To Kevin with all thanks for a lifetime of friendship

Maxwell Dodd

A GIFT OF ENCOURAGEMENT

maxwelldodd.com

Spooner Dodd Consulting Services

Post Office Box 462

EDGECLIFF NEW SOUTH WALES 2027

A U S T R A L I A

maxwelldodd.com@gmail.com

“And the Winner is...YOU!”

The words you would most want to hear of yourself. And the words you can hear of yourself if you make the effort. This is a work on *action*.

This is a small guidebook for the one who hopes to hear these memorable words of the excitements along the way to the victory dais. It sets out in short essays summaries of the qualities of the victorious and accomplishing and invites you to share their excitements.

We are in an age of deep anxiety, made worse by our considerable overreactions to the Covid 19 virus and all the alarms of “climate change.” It is so easy to be so afraid: wisdom would appear to suggest that caution is a great virtue. As will be apparent, I do not share those opinions. I see individuals as the possessors of qualities of greatness and achievements, those who receive the gold medals and whose successes are the worthy responses to committed effort and responsible planning. I am sure that the fears and restrictions that we would put upon ourselves (and the systems of governance within which we live) can be very easily and successfully coped with. Victorious living is of us all, and of you, in particular.

Winning comes in so many guises that it is not possible to attempt to list them. What is certain, however, is that you can be the winner you wish to be (you alone know the context of your victory) and that the satisfactions of a complete fulfilled life are yours to be had. Read the following brief essays and be enriched by their guidance. Take that support into the depths of your being and be the man or woman of your dreams. You owe no less to yourself and no less to the world around you.

May you know all the blessings of earthly fulfilment.

Maxwell Dodd,

Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

Thursday 3 June 2021

DREAM

The one thing that matters in the life of fulfilment and completeness is that the man or woman seen to be the one of exceptional achievement has a *dream*.

I have no idea of your dream but I know that you have one. The difference between the winner and the loser in life is that the winner had a dream and committed himself or herself to its attainment and the failure did not. He (or she) saw mountain tops and paths upward and committed their days and their weeks and their months and their years to ascending them. They looked for the track as it wound its way up the mountain side and saw that it was taking them up to that distant peak whose sight was what had seized them. The thrill of possibility burnt long and hard.

The man or woman who can in greater age look back in life and rejoice and have no fears for the future is the one who had a dream and gave himself or herself ceaselessly to it. The dream possessed and gripped and engraved itself on their consciousness and they were moved to the depths of their being by it. It was the way of Life and it had to be pursued.

The winner is the one who has experienced that vision and given himself (or herself) to its fullness without hesitation and with a willing surrender of other things to its attainment. Nearly all older people look back on their lives and can express disappointment that they did not do all that they had hoped. You need not be one such. You can be the one who has run the full distance and has met the result that grasped one in youth.

Dream and dream and perspire in its glorious hope. To have done less is to deny the grandeur of your being and the measure of your full humanity.

And the winner will be...YOU!

BRAVERY

To hear your name called as the victor will have required considerable bravery, and a constancy of boldness. It will call forth from you a willingness to go into the unknown and the unfamiliar and to march forward in strange locations as though they were your own backyard. It will require the presentation of the individual as though that one could not possibly fail or be reduced.

Bravery connotes an impeccable posture, a head held high, shoulders swept apart, the chin in, and a straightness of back that will say to lesser men “I am in charge and this is my decision.” The quality of bravery is the fundamental of the leadership of which we write and which lies in you, perhaps awaiting discovery. Decisiveness is the great quality of the bold and daring and will be immensely rewarded in all its manifestations, commercial, professional, social, sporting, or anything else.

When next a challenge far beyond your experience calls you, when next an opportunity of achievement offers itself and you wonder if you are capable of it, remember that the victory you seek will only come to the brave man or woman for whom the moment of challenge is the glorious second to be seized with energy. Within you lies a quality of which you may at this moment know little but which yet within the shortest of times can become the essence of your existence.

Bravery, courage, daring, the words all mean the same thing. Go forwards without concern in the assurance that within you lies an adequacy of which you may never have previously been aware. Where those dazzling qualities will take you will only be experiences of growth and development. You will be greater and the world around you will be blessed.

DETERMINATION

Grit is great.

It is the willingness to commit oneself to the task or the longer-term future when the end is months or even years ahead. It is the simple capacity to see the longer term in the immediate context of the present.

Staying with the task and adhering to the future object is critical. Nothing of the longer term can be ever had without a simple commitment to its fulfilment and the acceptance of the various bumps and setbacks that will inevitably come with extended ambition. Difficulties and questions will arise - they are certain - but the real test is one of a simple determination to see the longer term in the shorter term and to see the potholes on the road as things to be met successfully or, perhaps, better still, to be avoided, if this is possible.

Make up your mind and see the aim. It can come in so many forms that any list will be inadequate. It may be the successful completion of a course of studies, the challenge of the year's football competition or any sporting challenge, it may be the release of a new product on a market or the fulfilment of the dream of self-employment by opening a business. What you are aiming to achieve must be open to a simple statement of possibility. To dare to put it to words is not vanity: it is the first step towards victory and achievement.

Stay with the task and commit yourself and your energies to it. And find that your commitment to the object will be itself a source of inspiration to those around you. Never be surprised at unexpected offers of assistance or the willingness of others to stand aside to allow you passage. You have shown the great quality of determination and others will respect you for it and respond accordingly.

Stick with it - the victory will be yours and even more certain. Smiles all round.

SIMPLICITY

I remember many moons ago reading the great American classic work, the bane I gather of the lives of so many American schoolboys, Henry David Thoreau's *Walden Pond*, the book based on his experience of two years in hermitage at Walden Pond near Cambridge in Massachusetts from the summer of 1844 to the summer of 1846. It was about half way through the work (I still recall that it was on page 119 of the copy I was reading!) when I met the extraordinary two word sentence, "Simplify, simplify." I was thunderstruck by its beauty and elegance. A truly remarkable work was yet more remarkable.

And yet as I grow older and closer to senility, I realise again that in this simple sentence of two words lies a great truth. Simplicity.

As the first principle of effective human existence, it has few peers. We live in worlds of dark complexity made more and more confusing by our developing more and more rules and regulations by which to restrict and limit ourselves (often for little good purpose). As the long retired lawyer, I am well aware of the proliferation of regulations and statutes and the overweening authority we are conferring upon institutions and the bureaucracies to make decisions affecting our lives when we would be so much better off with the simplicities of freedom. We must be ever-watchful of such things - but I fear we are not!

And yet we so admire the innocence and simplicity of the baby or the family dog. The tiny ones accept the care and generosity around them without any question or negotiation. I am mindful of the wisdom of the guidance of Jesus that the Kingdom of Heaven was to be judged by the innocence of babes. So true.

However complex our lives and however demanding the various calls upon our time, we must seek in all things to find the straightforward and untrammelled. Simplicity is available in all circumstances and its discovery will be the great statement of victory we would be seeking.

Simply, be simple.

RESPECT

The great reward of talent and its achieving application: the respect of others for the measure of our accomplishments.

But it has a second and equally important translation: the respect we give ourselves. Nothing matches the wonders of self-confidence and the majesty of the self-assurance that with deep humility can exercise authority and leadership. It is to that level of personal respect, you are invited by this essay.

We all know those who seem to be the great possessors of a remarkable capacity to walk into any situation and come away from it with the head held high and the aim of the visit met. But their great quality was probably a self-respect that was discernible and yet surprisingly simple and unaffected.

Obviously, it is to that one that respect will be given. Respect is what we would all want in the myriad challenges of life from the courtesy being offered to us in the world of shopping or entertainment or hospitality to the recognition of higher professional challenges and encounters and their resolution. We all know the difference between the good nature of those on the other side of a counter who understand “customer service” and the discourtesy of one merely performing ritualistic deeds. The distinction is obvious and of course our repeat and referred buying turns on it.

We give respect easily to those deserving of it and deny it equally quickly to those undeserving. A lesson for the young indeed is to see how sharp is the distinction. And yet the respect that the achiever wins from others is usually the consequence of a deep respect that one can reflect of himself or herself. Winners are likely to be winning on all fronts at once.

Respect yourself, respect the other. And be respected - deeply!

PURPOSE

Nothing is more important in life generally and its daily *minutiae* than purpose. We are called upon to know where we are going and how we intend to get there. Purpose is mandatory.

There is clear, bold purpose in seeking a major accomplishment, personally from a major challenge like a university degree or a sporting championship, to something of a larger communal or national nature such as an international sporting event or even international conflict. There has to be the awareness of the goal of the undertaking and that goal should be open to a definition by the simplicity of one word or phrase. And that goal will be seen to be itself the consequence of meeting shorter term and smaller purposes along the way to it.

I am so saddened to see so many for whom life is daily survival without any recognition of wider purposes. That this afflicts so many and often so many older men is tragic and disappointing. We need a purpose in getting out of our beds every morning, something that calls us to the daily battlefields and challenges where our victories and accomplishments colour our lives with delight. The burdens of the depressed are so often linked to this lack of ambition or purpose or vision of a wider possibility.

Going forward in life is critical to its enjoyment and the fulfilment of our deeper selves. Purpose is our watchword and the very thing that gives the wider experience meaning.

Know who you are and what you can offer life and then find a purpose that will mean all is met. Happiness and all manner of rewards will follow and the world will be blessed and be a larger place of greater blessings to many more.

PLANNING

The obvious corollary of purpose. Planning.

It is one thing to know what the object is: it is another to know the detail of the journey to it. And as all those with professional qualifications will tell you, the devil will always lie in the detail.

Whatever purpose you may have from the simple object of passing an examination to the launch of a new business or a new market for an old business will require much planning. And that planning will be as detailed as it is broad. Planning is the attempt to have solved the questions that will arise along the line before they are met. By definition it can be called “educated guesswork” for such it is, but it will never surprise to know that older heads can forecast usually with considerable accuracy the course of events and the twists and turns along the way. Good planning is therefore not fixed but has been sorted out on the basis of probabilities. That something utterly unexpected can occur is far outside the conspectus of planning and is part of the challenge of dealing with the future. It can often mean a totally new approach or something similar to it. That planning did not foresee it does not deny planning. In a sense, it confirms paradoxically its wisdom.

Planning is of all terms, from the shortest to the longest. You are asked the question: “Where do you want to be in ten years’ time?” The answer to that question will have many subsidiary answers from the longest term of some major object to the questions of the processes along the line to get there. And those answers will themselves change during the term.

That this is so does not deny planning. It recognises the fluidity of events and the excitements of the unexpected.

Plan and prepare and be clear of the longer term purpose and enjoy the various challenges along the route! You are big enough to meet them all and get to the end you desire.

WARMTH

We all know much of warmth in our dealings with those around us. We show obvious warmth to our loved ones, to husbands and wives and parents and brothers and sisters, and to those who have made our lives richer and more complete. Warmth to such ones is easy and unquestioning.

We should however find warmth in our dealings with people on much larger scales. Buddhism makes much of compassion, that extraordinary gift of sharing ourselves with the other, which is itself a significant part of the spiritual development of any one of us. Compassion indeed comes from the Latin and connotes heat. A good guide to our human contacts from day to day.

We are called to show deep recognition and respect for the other in the singular as we meet that other day to day in the course of our lives. It is a significant part of the world of which we would wish to be part that we offer warmth and are given it in all the various locations to which life will take us.

We expect warmth in the industry known today as hospitality. We are horrified when the person on the other side of a counter is less than courteous and friendly. The Chinese have a saying which is perfect. “A man who does not smile must not open a shop.” So very true that it barely requires assertion.

Enjoy the other. Find reasons to be at one with the other. Give to the other. Recognise the other as an equal and be blessed to find that you have created cycles of shared comfort and acceptance and of course find easier commercial and social interactions accordingly.

There is nothing negative in offering warmth. It is the underlying structure of life that we are functioning together effectively and with significant benefit to all.

Be warm, be friendly, be open, be trusting.

And be the winner!

DYNAMISM

The compliment applied to the great builders of major commercial and professional empires is that he or she was “dynamic.” He (or she) was power plus - energy and decision poured out of the being and the sparks were flying. The human powerhouse - *in spades!*

This is the tribute that is to be paid to you as the man or woman named as “the winner.”

Great energy and vigour are available to you and the rewards of their application. They come from the simple application of your essence to the purposes to which you are giving yourself. We are so cautious and concerned that something may be less than perfect. We so easily see a difficulty to be met on the way to our dreams to be so large that we make only half-hearted efforts to achieve and fail accordingly. Not the reaction of the man or woman of this small *opus!*

Dynamic behaviour is the way of the deeply committed and those of sharp clarity of purpose who can see the final result and the journey to it all at once. Steam can be seen and decisions are made and the consequences are the resolution of our dreams.

Great accomplishments attend the vigorous and committed and they are arts that can be learnt. Give yourself wholeheartedly to the plan and all that will be involved with it and work with utter resolution to its fulfilment. When the going seems difficult and the challenges numerous and burdensome, remember that is the place where the truly dynamic will shine and achieve. You have it within you to be one such and you can learn what it is to shine with power and force.

Step out into the world with all the energy within you and watch all that you want to occur happening around you.

The advice given in youth is “Give the job to the busiest man.” He will always know how to manage his time so that all that he has to achieve will be done. The result will be entirely satisfying and you will have caught the fire of the imagination of the achiever.

The winner will be *YOU* - the irrepressible man or woman of dynamism!

PATIENCE

Patience is the most obvious sign of accomplishment. It recognises that we have the time to make things work properly and that rush is not part of success. “More haste, less speed” is especially good advice.

Patience is the recognition that we have the time to achieve our purposes and that waiting our turn while others are dealt with is a proper reaction to the wider questions of living. And yet in the daily rounds of life, I see people reacting with excessive speed and failing themselves and others.

One of the most obvious pieces of advice I was ever given as a child was “Do things one at a time.” If you have various demands upon you at any one moment, however many there may be, deal with each one independently of the others. I recall in my professional years one afternoon in September 1978 when I had three major crises to cope with at once. In two hours of sharp separation and the shuffling of files and telephone calls I had resolved all three and could enjoy a well deserved coffee. I had not panicked (I am relieved to say - perhaps I do understand my own message!) and with total concentration on one at a time, all problems had been met and resolved and life could come back to something approaching peace.

Patience is the supreme test of time management. There is time to resolve what has to be met and the recognition of the fact the quality of the winner. Life has times of pressure but the management of it and the victories required will require patience and much of it.

Again it is the old story of the longer term as opposed to the immediate. But the victory you seek lies in the your willingness to allow events to take their ordered course and to be a participant in that ordered course.

When next you are in a queue of people, enjoy the moment of detachment and peace. Fume not - your turn will come.

CALMNESS

We all know the impression that dazzles us when in some moment of serious crisis or challenge, the participant is able, so it seems, to draw upon some deep inner quality of power and authority that seems so alien to us. The examples are so many and so varied that describing them is an impossibility. And yet we all know of them and can think of examples without any difficulty.

The capacity to be in charge of ourselves when the bombs are bursting around us and the bullets whizzing past our heads is an acquired quality that any one of us can attain. As usual, it comes from the wisdom of the Buddha (who seemed to understand life in the West in the 21st century with a remarkable precision and foresight) and his advice on “detachment.” Detachment is not something cold and aloof but rather a remarkable gift of being able to recognise objectively the needs of the moment. It also sees the need of separation from the fray emotionally. When next you see a person who is overworked and behaving frantically, weep for him or her. That one has forgotten to separate himself or herself emotionally from the sources of the pressure and his stress is self-evident. Remember that stress is not the pressure of the moment but our reaction to it.

Calmness (serenity and tranquillity) are the way of the successful management of all the events of life and the greater their complexity the more necessary the need of those qualities.

The journey to such levels of personal management is easy. It lies in the Buddhist guidance of meditation, now coming to be recognised in the West for its wisdom and practicality. Meditation is the great inward journey to calm and peace and the separation of the self from the moment and its demands. As a practice it is easy and almost absurdly so. It lies in the simple composure of sitting quietly and with a mind as inactive as possible for about 20 minutes every morning (with a repeat if possible during the day - not always possible). Slowing the breathing down will be a great boon as well but there is no specific practice of meditation for all that you see of it in the press. You will be your own best guide to what fits your needs. Essential calming lies in its daily practice with discipline and commitment but the rewards of self-management are of such a measure that one will wonder why one did not start so much earlier.

The victor you aim to be, the man or woman of power and enterprise and authority, will need the balance that meditation offers more and more. It will become your daily commitment at all costs and its rewards will be yet greater vigour and command of yourself.

The rewards will be self-evident and the prizes yet greater.

I am reminded of the Jewish wisdom from Psalm 46 - "*Be still and know that I am God.*" No more to say.

KINDNESS

The other point of guidance on effective living with a Buddhist origin is compassion. The Buddha saw that important as the demands of meditation and inward travelling were, there was a second side to that wisdom. It lay in the simple acceptance of the individual other as an equal.

Compassion is a word which connotes the giving of the self to the other but perhaps a word that covers the notion better is simply “kindness.” It is the word used by the Dalai Lama for our deepest personal duty to the other. He simply says that his religion is “kindness.”

It is the simple recognition of the other and of the dignity and worth of that other and of the significance of that other. It does not concern itself with the identity of the other or the connexions we may have with that other. It is our universal duty of equality with the other however long or however short may be our contact. I find to my alarm that the simple courtesy of allowing another person to go ahead in a public concourse seems unheard of and yet it is the most basic test of kindness that one has done something where only some other will be benefitted however briefly indeed.

It is so easy to be seen to be philanthropic (we even use large, learned words to define such generosity and kindness) by the creation of public good works but the real test of kindness and goodness will be in the *minutiae* of life. That other person sitting beside you in public transport or needing another pair of hands with a bag for fully five seconds. That is the test of kindness that is real and true and worthy of the man or woman of victory.

Become aware of the other and celebrate your giving to that other in the smallest of possible links and you will have discovered the true path forward into the greatness that lies within you.

Kindness, compassion, charity, love. They all mean the same thing and they are the tests of truly successful living, the mark of the champion that you aspire to be.

RESPONSIBILITY

The quality of the truly great is the willingness to accept responsibility for themselves and those around them. It is indeed in responsibility that the truly powerful exhibit the strength that is within them.

I am concerned that the social welfare programmes of Western governments fail to ask of those to whom largesse is being provided that they accept greater responsibility for their own development and more especially for the defeat of their situations. That such systems exist is indeed a tribute to the Western canon of democracy and the rule of law and general social welfare and is to be welcomed. That a society of fairness (I find the word “justice” tortured as it connotes to a philosopher the route to fairness and not its result) is what we are seeking is to be commended. But it does ask of all who receive benefits that such people do their best to be as little of a source of need as possible.

My years as a lawyer were spent much of the time in courtrooms or in preparing for them. The criminal law makes much of the need for the responsibility of the alleged felon for the events which bring him or her to a court for a judgment. Responsibility was easy to establish usually and its consequences often painful. That does not diminish responsibility but rather confirms its wisdom.

Parents know that the lessons of growing children require that they accept responsibility for their journeys of living. We are all aware that the young often do not have a developed sense of what it means to have to accept the consequences of their acts and indeed guiding them on such routes is part of parental responsibility to their children. Failure to learn true responsibility for ourselves and our acts is a major loss and its consequences can be very painful.

Responsibility for a decision is part of the many strengths of the accomplished and accomplishing. Leadership turns on that quality of responsible decision making and the willingness at times to make decisions that may bring pain into the lives of those less able to deal with it. That does not diminish the quality of the responsibility or of the leadership that goes with it.

In short, responsibility is a major challenge to the successful. But it is part of the armoury of the talented and victorious and its easy acceptance is an important tool in success.

CONCLUSION

“And the Winner is...YOU!”

The words we all want to hear. But as I have pointed out, getting to the dais is the outcome of a life that is properly managed and reflects the wisdom of the victorious in life.

You will see from the various headings that there are many qualities which make for victories in life.

But essentially the life of the man or woman likely to hear the words in the beginning of this brief essay is one that has reflected the qualities of the victorious and successful in life. The man or woman of greater age who can look back on the journey of living and take pleasure not only in the memories of the journey and the places visited, so to speak, but also in the final outcome of delight at attainment, is the one whose life reflects fully the lessons set out.

Successful living requires all manner of virtues, the courage to plan and commit, the wisdom of accepting the need of the involvement of the other and the proper management of the contacts with that other and indeed those others, the richer journey inwards to finding deeper levels of performance and empowerment. The final victory will be seen in the lives of those around the achiever, be they his or her family, friends, or contacts.

Winning is for you and I trust that you will be the being of your dreams. Go forward with vigour and courage and remember the significance of a richer spiritual voyage inwards daily and the essential quality of gentleness and kindness. You will have brought much to yourself, and, equally, much to the world around you.

“And the Winner is...YOU!”

Your guide

Maxwell Dodd is a fifth generation Australian who was born in the Hunter Valley in New South Wales in August 1942 at the time of great fears of Japanese invasion. After a traditional, indeed, classical education at the Australian equivalent of a Public School, he qualified as a solicitor and practised in the courts of London and Sydney as the advocate for those who were poor in spirit and of estate. He realised from his dealings with the courts and their customers that his real vocation did not lie in advocacy for all his professional success, but in a wider ministry of personal development and spiritual growth. After spending many years as the carer of his elderly Mother, he has now embarked on his second career as an enlarger of the soul, the traveller and cyclist, and a guide to the great human adventure called Life.

He is a bachelor and, while Sydney is in a sense “home,” his paths regularly take him to the wider world of Britain and Europe.

A Gift of Encouragement is an operation that reflects his vision of the individual’s potential of attaining spiritual and earthly fullness and its purpose has the wider aim of assisting people of all ages and experiences to find balance and much more in their fulfilled lives.