

CrossAbilities!

20 Excuses for Neglecting Your Personal & Professional Development

PROBLEM: Few people are fully devoted to a lifetime of intentional, strategic, personal and professional development. For most, growth is not only sporadic and accidental; it's also unfocused and misdirected. They justify this by making excuses like the ones we have heard and/or used so many times. **NOTE:** If you prefer excuses over solutions, stop reading this NOW!

SOLUTION: Read the following list of excuses and check the ones you have used in the past. Add others to the list as needed. Next, circle the ones you know you should eliminate from your life, starting today. Finally, sign the list and display it in a place you will see often to remind yourself of your promise.

- ___ **I'm too busy.** Take care of your mind. It's just as important as your body. Are you too busy to eat, sleep, bathe and exercise? The various consequences of neglect are different, but similarly tragic.
- ___ **Training doesn't fit into my schedule.** If you are willing to let your calendar run your life instead of your life running your calendar, that's your choice, but it's no excuse. If you truly can't attend a seminar, listen to an educational CD. Zig Ziglar calls this "Automobile University."
- ___ **I have more important things to do.** What's more important than taking care of you? Not much. Your ability to help others is limited by your level of development. Surely there are activities in your life than can be postponed or eliminated in favor of your growth.
- ___ **My only free time is at night and then I'm too tired.** – This excuse might be the simplest to overcome. Just like daylight Savings time, you can shift your "awake time." **Every day, go to bed 30 minutes earlier and get up 30 minutes earlier.** 30 minutes when you are fresh instead of tired will change your life!
- ___ **I'm good for now. (Meaning: I'll make it up as I go.)** Whether you are a recent graduate or a seasoned veteran in the workforce, there is always a need to grow because you don't know what you don't know. Growth is the preparation that readies you for the challenges and opportunities you cannot yet see.
- ___ **I just finished school – I'll start up again when I need it.** While this is possible, it is also dangerous wishful thinking. In almost any activity, it's much harder to restart than it is to keep on going. Why put your growth at risk?
- ___ **My employer doesn't mandate personal development.** A company that doesn't encourage or require professional development doesn't value your contributions. To them, you are a replaceable commodity.
- ___ **My employer doesn't provide or pay for training.** Successful people don't have an entitlement mentality. Does your employer buy everything you want or need? The other possibility is the company is in trouble. Either way, the company will soon be in trouble.
- ___ **Training costs too much!** Not true – you just can't afford it. This is usually a knee-jerk reaction, but if you truly can't afford it, don't sit on your hands. Take advantage of the free stuff on the Internet.

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- ___ **I'll probably have to cancel – something always comes up.** Is this logical? Is this fair to your growth? Is this consistent with your commitment to your future? Stop sacrificing your growth activities to protect phantom situations. Instead, deal with conflicts if and when they happen. Then, think of solutions not with “an OR mindset.” Be creative. Ask yourself, “How can I make room for both?”
- ___ **I don't have access to the Internet.** Yes you do. There's a library or restaurant nearby. Unless you live at the North Pole there's a way for you to gain access to online personal development materials.
- ___ **I hate reading!** You can change that if you try. But, if you're not willing, listen to recordings of books.
“The person who doesn't read is no better off than the person who can't read.” – Zig Ziglar
- ___ **I don't have a CD player!** Most people have one and someone you know probably has an earlier model they would happily give away. Ask around and you will find one.
- ___ **Workshops and seminars are boring.** Boredom is an attitude and all attitudes can be changed. Read “See You At the Top” by Zig Ziglar and change the “garbage dump thinking” that is poisoning your attitudes and killing your life and career.
- ___ **Workshops are all about that touchy feeling stuff.** How would you feel if “So what!” was my response? Some of it IS touchy feely. What's wrong with working on our emotional intelligence? It's as much a part of our human nature as our intellectual side and deserves our attention.
- ___ **The excitement of seminars doesn't last very long.** “People often say that motivation doesn't last. Well, neither does bathing, that's why we recommend it daily.” – Zig Ziglar
- ___ **I never get any long-term value from workshops.** There are at least two reasons for this. One is your negative attitude. The other is your failure to implement what you learn. There are solutions for both of these and they can be found in books, recordings and the workshops you refuse to attend.
- ___ **I don't know where to begin.** This excuse is another example of fear. It could also be pure laziness. How you start is less important than simply getting started. Have you asked someone to help you decide?
- ___ **I don't know why I don't go.** This is a response typically motivated by fear. Deep down you do know why and it's something that triggers your fear(s). Feel your fears and go anyway!
- ___ **I'm retiring soon – what's the point?** When you stop learning and growing you accelerate dying. Even if you are an exception, what life is worth living without learning something new every day?
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YOUR PROMISE TO YOURSELF: This is my plan and my promise to be committed to eliminating the excuses that keep me from growing personally and professionally.

(MY FULL LEGAL NAME PRINTED)

(MY SIGNATURE)

(DATE)