

5 STEPS *TO BECOMING* A BETTER YOU



Want to become the best version of you? Or at least to begin taking the necessary steps to start being more productive, more creative, happier and more confident?

There are plenty of ways to do that and some of them involve taking a deep look at yourself and discovering who you really are and what you really want from life.

But while this can work, there are also some much more practical and straightforward strategies you can use to keep growing and improving yourself. In this short report, we'll be looking at the five things you should do if you want to keep yourself growing and improving. These are concrete steps that anyone can take but which can't help to improve and develop you over time.

Learn

One of the most important things you can do to keep developing and growing yourself is to learn. That means that you should keep on taking on new challenges, discovering new things and developing new skills and abilities.

Maybe you attend an electronic engineering seminar. Maybe you go to dance classes. Maybe you teach yourself to use a new piece of software to further your career. Or maybe you learn a new language.

Whichever of these options you choose, continuing to learn will help to make your brain more plastic as it produces neurotransmitters associated with the growth and development of neurons and neuronal connections. You'll produce more brain derived neurotrophic factor, more dopamine, more norepinephrine and more. And as a result, you will find *all* new topics easier to learn and your brain will be more similar to that of a much younger person's.

The same is true for the brain as is for the body: you can either grow and improve, or you can atrophy and deteriorate. The body is *always* changing: it is simply up to you whether it changes for the better or for the worse.

And if nothing else, continually learning new things will give you a broader mind, a wider range of experiences and skills to draw upon and a ton of useful knowledge. And the new ideas and concepts that you can come up with as a result of combining experience from many different fields is almost limitless. This is how you become a 'polymath' like Da Vinci, Newton or Elon Musk.

Make time to learn!

Travel

Travelling is incredibly important not only for your happiness and your sense of accomplishment and purpose, but also to make you a more rounded and even a more *decent* human being.

Did you know that people are rated as more tolerant and understanding if they went to college? This has nothing to do with education or background – it is simply that people who have moved away from home have less narrow views and a better understanding of the wider world.

And this is even truer for those people who travel far and wide and mingle with other cultures and see other places for themselves. This broadens your mind and gives you a ‘bigger picture’ view. It can also help you to put things in perspective a little and to realize that many of your troubles and your concerns are actually somewhat petty in comparison to the hunger and poverty you encounter in other parts of the world.

People who have travelled and had adventures will be naturally more interesting to talk to because they’ll have

such a breadth of experiences to share and because they'll appear more worldly and more knowledgeable. But it's simply rubbing shoulders with people from different cultures and experiencing unique locales that will truly develop you.

To get a little deeper in our understanding of how travelling can change and *improve* a person, it pays to consider the philosophies of Georg Hegel. Hegel believed that it was *crucial* that we challenge our ideas in order to develop them and to gain a more accurate world view. He described this as requiring a specific process. The 'thesis' is the original idea that you have. The antithesis is the opposite view. And the synthesis is the resultant idea that takes lessons from *both* views.

In order for us to be as knowledgeable and as effective as possible, it is crucial that we challenge our existing ideas and develop them by incorporating *other* ideas.

Refusal to do this otherwise will eventually result in our own demise, as we become more and more attached to defunct and irrelevant concepts.

Without these outside views and experiences to challenge us, we simply become more and more extreme in our own views. This happens through 'confirmation bias' as we seek out more knowledge to confirm what we already hold to be

true. And it happens through 'convergence' and 'divergence', the likelihood of in-groups becoming more similar to each other and *less* similar to outgroups.

We can look to nature for a great analogy. In nature, the single most important thing for the survival of our DNA is diversity. We seek mates for procreation because they are different from us and because they introduce *new* genetic material into our makeup. If we continually in-breed, then the flaws and imperfections in our DNA become exaggerated to the point that we can even become deformed or unwell as a species!

Conversely, having offspring with people of different cultures and from different regions will create stronger DNA that is less prone to illness.

The same goes for our ideas. This is why it is so good for us as a species to overcome borders and differences and to interact with others that are diverse and varied as possible. By challenging and constantly reassessing your ideas and beliefs, you will come out with stronger, more accurate and more *useful* ideas and beliefs.

Travel is one of the greatest things you can do for the mind and the soul.

Meditate

If there's one new habit you should consider adopting, then it is meditation. Meditation is simply practiced focus and concentration. Here, you will put yourself in a quiet environment and then focus on clearing your mind of distracting and unwanted thoughts. You will be ruminating on stressful topics, and you will gradually become better at focussing and remaining calm.

This is an incredibly powerful skill because it gives you the ability to rise above stress and panic and to remain calm no matter what is going on around you. This can make you a happier individual, as you'll be less bothered by hard days at work or large deadlines but it can also make you more effective as you gain greater control over your emotional response, more emotional stability and the ability to concentrate more effectively on given tasks.

And did you know that meditation physically changes the structure of the brain? It has been demonstrated to increase 'cortical thickness', which means that there is more grey matter and a greater density of neural connections. Studies also show that meditation can improve concentration, focus, emotional stability and even IQ. In other words, meditating

makes you a more focussed and even *more intelligent* individual.

This can be a difficult habit to get into, especially if you are someone who is unfamiliar with how meditation works, or perhaps who has never considered it in the past.

The simplest form of mediation is mindfulness meditation. Here, you simply sit somewhere quietly and ‘watch’ your thoughts go by. The idea is to allow them to pass by like clouds without *engaging* in them or worrying about their content. Don’t punish yourself for letting your mind wander, just make a note of the thought and then dismiss it. Not only does this teach you to rise above your thoughts and be less concerned by them but it also helps you to gain a greater understanding of the contents of your own mind so that you can predict your own reactions to future scenarios.

If you struggle to find the time necessary to commit, then try meditating for just 7 minutes a day. This amount of time is short enough that you should be able to slip it in without too much difficulty but it will be enough to start causing significant changes to the way your brain works.

Exercise

It might not be the most exciting or even surprising item on this list, but it is nevertheless absolutely crucial that exercise be part of your routine. Exercise is not just important as a way to get more physically fit: it can actually change your hormonal balance and even your brain in profoundly positive ways.

Did you know that exercise – both CV and resistance training – can actually boost your IQ and increase your concentration? One possible explanation for how resistance training might accomplish this is by helping with ‘embodied cognition’. Embodied cognition is a theory as to the working of the brain that suggests we actually understand things by using our bodies and our memories of our interactions with the world: when we hear a story about someone being cold, we actually remember what it is like to be cold and even *feel* it slightly with our bodies.

Training can strengthen your connection with your body and in doing this, it will make you better at using it to understand foreign concepts.

At the same time, getting into better shape will improve your energy levels, will help you to sleep better, will make you

less prone to illness, will make you more attractive, will enable you to look better in your clothes, will raise your confidence, will improve your physical performance in sports and competition, will make you better able to take care of yourself in a physical confrontation and much, much more.

Again, you don't need to commit to huge amounts of exercise right away. Just a few workouts a week can be enough to start making a difference and you can take this relatively gently at least to begin with!

Grooming and Style

Everything else on this list has been about making yourself healthier, calmer and more worldly. These are deep changes that will affect you from the inside out. But grooming and taking care of your sense of style is different. This is an example of a change that happens from the outside in: it's something immediate and easy you can change about yourself that will then begin to make you feel better on the inside.

What I'm trying to say is: don't write this off as something trite and shallow. Looking after your appearance is essentially a way to invest in yourself and to demonstrate that you place value in your appearance. This sends a

powerful signal to others that makes you seem more capable, more confident and much more attractive. As a result, it can help you to increase your chances of getting a job interview, of attracting a member of the opposite sex and of walking into a room and turning heads for all the right reasons.

What's more, is that the sense of confidence you gain from looking and feeling great can help you to feel better about yourself and to be happier and more content as a result.

Start by choosing to invest a little more financially into what you wear and how you groom yourself. It's better to have fewer clothes but for those clothes to be better made. And they say that your haircut should directly reflect the amount of money that you're responsible for in your career. Ever heard the expression 'dress for the job you want'?

Consider speaking with a style advisor, certainly be willing to get slightly out of your comfort zone and find a time to groom yourself regularly. Oh and definitely invest in the future: if you want to feel amazing in 10 years time, then moisturising and protecting yourself from the sun will make a big help!

Conclusions

With all these changes you will slowly begin to evolve from the inside and outside. You will look and act more confident and capable and you will feel healthier, more full of energy and stronger all at the same time. Just 5 steps and you can begin your self-transformation!