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**Foreword**

This manual is part of the Fleischer Scholars Program developed by entrepreneur and investor Morton Fleischer. The program is based on the philosophy and techniques Mr. Fleischer developed during his career.

Morton Fleischer believes that all Americans should have the opportunity to be a part of the American dream. He founded the Fleischer Scholars Foundation to help accomplish this goal. The Fleischer Scholars Program is designed to support the goals of talented, underserved high school juniors who would be the first family member to attend college.

During the week-long summer program at participating colleges and universities, participants gain problem-solving skills and build a roadmap for success. Students learn how to become “Master Adaptive Learners” and build habits that will support their success in their careers and their lives.

Since the first residential program at Arizona State University (ASU) in July 2010, the Fleischer Scholars Program has impacted hundreds of students. At ASU alone, 620 students had been trained as of 2022, with 85% going on to college. In addition to the summer program, participants are tracked through their senior year.

The Fleischer Scholars Program has changed lives with the commitment of participating universities’ intellectual capital and infrastructure, and the content, funding, and guidance from Mr. Fleischer and his wife, Donna.

About Morton Fleischer

Mr. Fleischer is an experienced financier, entrepreneur, and real estate investor. Over his business career of four decades, he formed and managed more than twenty real estate companies. These companies have invested over $20 billion in single-tenant commercial real estate projects since 1981. Three of these companies were taken public. Spirit Finance Corporation was traded on the NYSE from 2004 to 2007. Franchise Finance Corporation of America, where he remained Chairman of the Board and CEO until 2001, was listed on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in 1994 and purchased by GE Capital in 2001, and finally, S.T.O.R.E. Capital (NYSE: STOR) in 2014. S.T.O.R.E remains one of the largest, fast-growing net-lease Real Estate Investment Trusts (REIT) in America. S.T.O.R.E was purchased in 2022 by GIC and Oak Street Investment Funds for approximately $14 billion.

Mr. Fleischer received his Bachelor of Arts Degree from Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, which also conferred on him its Distinguished Business Alumni Award in 1993.

**Module 1**

**In America, You Determine Your Future**

What is your vision for your future?

Do you want to:

* have happiness, income, wealth, and success?
* “make a difference” in the world?
* live a life that is rewarding and exciting?

Or will you stay in the neighborhood where you grew up? Will you end up working in a tedious, mundane job? Will you become bored by the lack of challenge and wonder how your life could have been different?

As an American, you have the power and the opportunity to make those choices. You can write the script of your own life!

The Only Limits to What You Can Achieve Are Your Courage and Talent.

Because you live in the United States of America, you have decisive advantages. Our system of Democratic Capitalism supports individual achievement by providing the following:

* An incentive-driven market economy that rewards success
* A robust legal framework that protects individual property rights
* A representative government that respects every individual’s right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness
* A system of public and private cultural institutions guided by the principles of liberty and justice for all.

No matter your background, you have unlimited possibilities for achieving economic success. You can choose your own career path. You may live and flourish. You have the freedom to enrich society with your efforts.

But nobody will hand you success – ***you must earn it***.

To take advantage of this country’s excellent environment and limitless business opportunities, you must develop your capacity to succeed. It is up to you to acquire the knowledge and skills you need.

People who sit and wait for luck to bring them what they want will be dissatisfied, unfulfilled, and even bitter for the rest of their lives. However, if you build up your personal wealth of knowledge and skills, you can create opportunities for success while making contributions that leave the world a better place.

Your past or your present circumstances do not define the rest of your life. ***You* determine your future, and it starts now!**

Self-Reflection – Module 1

1. Why is America called “The Land of Opportunity?”

# In his 1935 book, *The Epic of America*, James Truslow Adams described the “American Dream” as “a better, richer, and happier life for all our citizens of every rank.”[[1]](#footnote-1) Since then, authors have included religious freedom, universal education, equal rights under the law, and freedom of financial opportunity in their definitions.

# What is your definition of the “American Dream?”

**Module 2**

**Your Personal Wealth: Developing Your Mental Balance Sheet**

Shaping and controlling your life begins with understanding who and where you are right now. The “Mental Balance Sheet” was designed to help you recognize your current status and identify areas for improvement. The Mental Balance Sheet you create will document your personal wealth (Wealth of Knowledge) and provide a head start toward success. When used correctly and kept up-to-date, your Mental Balance Sheet will be a lifelong tool for reaching success.

What is a Balance Sheet?

A balance sheet is an overview of current standing. Businesses use a financial balance sheet to report the assets and liabilities that reflect their corporate wealth.

Business assets are things it owns that have value, such as physical property, investments, cash, and even “goodwill” from brand recognition or intellectual property (i.e., patents, trademarks, copyrights).

Business liabilities are debts it owes a third party, such as loans or bond payments, bills payable, payroll, taxes, and earnings that have been “accrued” but not yet paid to stockholders.

This example shows categories of assets and liabilities typically found on a business balance sheet.

XYZ COMPANY

Balance Sheet

December 31, 2xxx

ASSETS\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_LIABILITIES\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Current Assets Current Liabilities

Cash Short-term Loans

Accounts Receivable Accounts Payable

Inventory Accrued Compensation

Supplies and Benefits

Income Taxes Payable

Other Accrued Liabilities

Investments Long-Term Liabilities

Notes Payable (Loans)

Land, Buildings and Equipment Bonds Payable

Deferred Income Taxes

Intangible Assets

Goodwill (Intellectual Property Owners/Stockholders Equity

and Brand Recognition) Common Stock

Retained Earnings

Other Assets

Your Mental Balance Sheet will track your “mental” wealth. You will use it to record your assets (your current knowledge from education, experience, and moral values) and your liabilities (the things you need to attain or change). An accurate mental balance sheet will help you track and build your personal wealth.

Your Mental Assets

You have valuable mental assets: your abilities, talents, and personality traits. These assets make you unique. You should list them on your Mental Balance Sheet. Your ongoing task is to build upon those foundational assets and strengthen the resources you will use to construct a fulfilling, rewarding, and exciting life’s journey. The assets you accumulate can provide a permanent source of happiness, income, wealth, and success.

The Mental Balance Sheet divides assets into three categories:

* Intellectual Capital - intelligence and knowledge attained through formal education;
* Empirical (Experiential) Knowledge - everything you have learned from life experiences
* Moral Compass - the moral values and beliefs which affect your character.

This is an example of how high school graduates might list their assets.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **High School Graduate**  **Mental Balance Sheet** | |
| **Assets** | **Liabilities** |
| **Intellectual Capital** |  |
| High School Diploma |  |
| Academic Knowledge and Skills –  Strength in Math and Science |  |
| Computer skills -  Word  Excel  WordPress |  |
| Intelligence  Creative problem solver |  |
|  |  |
| **Experiential Knowledge** |  |
| Learn from mistakes |  |
| Strong social (people) skills |  |
| Value of ambition |  |
| Organization |  |
| Internet marketing/building a presence |  |
|  |  |
| **Moral Compass** |  |
| High Moral Values:  Honesty  Respect for self and others |  |

Your Mental Liabilities

The second column on your Mental Balance Sheet is for your liabilities: the things that stand in the way of your plans for success. Your liabilities fall under the same categories as your assets:

* Intellectual Capital, such as the need to improve grades or complete an educational degree.
* Empirical (Experiential) Knowledge,negative attitudes or behaviors that create roadblocks to your progress.
* Moral Compass, bad habits or negative beliefs you need to change to succeed.

This is an example of how high school graduates might list their liabilities.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **High School Graduate**  **Mental Balance Sheet** | |
| **Assets** | **Liabilities** |
| **Intellectual Capital** |  |
| High School Diploma | Lacks advanced education |
| Academic Knowledge and Skills –  Strong in Math and Science | Needs to improve writing skills |
| Computer skills -  Word  Excel  WordPress |  |
| Intelligence  Creative problem solver |  |
|  |  |
| **Empirical (Experiential) Knowledge** |  |
| Learning from mistakes | A powerful fear of failure |
| Strong social (people) skills | Frequent negative, pessimistic attitude |
| Values ambition | Failure to form goals and stay focused on them |
| Organization | Wasting valuable time and mental energy online with social media or gaming |
| Internet Marketing / building a presence | Sometimes repeating mistakes |
|  | Hanging out with unmotivated ​friends who are jealous of his ​​success and talent |
|  | Unaware of change in the world |
|  | Not adapting well to change |
|  |  |
| **Moral Compass** |  |
| High Moral Values:  Honesty  Respects self and others | Spending too much time with people of bad character |

Creating Your Mental Balance Sheet

Creating your Mental Balance Sheet gives you the insight you need to make plans for adding beneficial assets and removing negative liabilities. It helps you track your progress and recognize effective ways of acquiring strengths and overcoming weaknesses. Improving your Mental Balance Sheet increases the valuable information and tools available for making decisions and devising methods for achieving your goals. It can direct you in building your personal wealth.

It is time to complete *your* Mental Balance Sheet. Use this template to list your personal assets (strengths) and liabilities (areas for improvement). Reflect carefully and do your best to create an accurate and truthful assessment of your current status.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **YOUR NAME**  **Mental Balance Sheet** | |
| **Assets** | **Liabilities** |
| **Intellectual Capital** |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| **Empirical (Experiential) Knowledge** |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| **Moral Compass** |  |
|  |  |

As you review your completed Mental Balance Sheet, you should identify the following:

* the primary assets you need to acquire in the short term
* weaknesses in your knowledge and experience that you can work on immediately.

**Continuing to add assets to and remove liabilities from your Mental Balance Sheet will determine the shape of your future.** This fundamental strategy will improve your decisions and performance for the rest of your life.

**Module 3**

**Strengthening Your Mental Balance Sheet**

How can an Emergency Room doctor quickly diagnose a patient’s condition? How does a business person scan a balance sheet and rapidly identify a problem? What allows a designer to glance at a web page and easily identify a small error?

Gaining Expertise

People with expertise in their fields have worked diligently to gather extensive intellectual and experiential knowledge. Their accumulated wisdom results in a vast mental database that the brain sifts through to find practical solutions. Their stored memories become “assets” used by the conscious and subconscious parts of the brain to evaluate situations and formulate first impressions. Because experts have filled their minds with valuable knowledge in their specific fields, their initial assessments of problems can be quick and highly accurate.

As Malcolm Gladwell writes in his book *Blink* (The Power of Thinking Without Thinking), “being able to act intelligently and instinctively in the moment is possible only after a long and rigorous course of education and experience.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

Adding assets to your mental balance sheet will strengthen your stored memories and improve your ability to evaluate situations, set realistic goals, and adapt to changing circumstances. The more assets you acquire, the more valuable and accurate your initial assessments and actions will be.

Knowledge is the Key

Knowledge is a powerful asset. You acquire knowledge by completing a formal education and gathering accurate information (Intellectual Capital), by gaining personal experience (Empirical Knowledge), and by absorbing positive values from uplifting books and life experiences (Moral Compass).

**Fact: The more you know, the better your decisions will be.**

Adaptive learning means improving your understanding through feedback and positive (or negative) reinforcement.

To gain knowledge throughout life and adapt to the ever-changing business environment, you must become a Master Adaptive Learner.

Note: According to Oxford Languages, the verb master means “to acquire complete knowledge or skill in (an [accomplishment](https://www.google.com/search?sca_esv=571764422&sxsrf=AM9HkKmCB7_d2gQNMOraoAg0LyT3PccesQ:1696796075399&q=accomplishment&si=ALGXSlY-leXnzJpICs6Ktl7g7ySNXIo5UMmNJrL3B_HT7E2wca35n7AvgTwIjhBSf3gP258zfGqjSIaSwo6Z3EBMSbgLHHL0E5DyHs5BxxPYwZHnUUuo5Qg%3D&expnd=1), technique, or art). A Master Adaptive Learner refers to someone who has achieved the ability to identify knowledge and skills necessary to succeed and to attain knowledge as it evolves continuously.

New experiences and circumstances can provide invaluable knowledge. How you deal with a unique situation determines whether the resulting knowledge will become an asset or a liability. If you are forward-thinking and able to adjust, your experiences can become assets. When you do not make the adjustments needed in a situation, the resulting knowledge from your experience can become a liability – leaving you behind your peers and the changing world.

Gaining Intellectual Capital

A college education provides knowledge that creates precious assets on your mental balance sheet. The subjects you study will significantly impact your future. The lessons you learn will increase your Intellectual Capital. Through formal education, you can add assets to your mental library that your brain will use as resources for the rest of your life.

A college education teaches you much more than the basics of a chosen profession. It enables you to explore additional subjects that broaden your worldview and feed your creative mind. A good college education teaches you:

* How to think
* How to acquire information
* How to write
* How to communicate professionally
* How to solve problems
* How to adapt

You will be exposed to great ideas, new philosophies, and different cultures at college. The subjects you study will significantly impact your career path and success in reaching your goals. Formal education provides a foundation of knowledge and a framework for continuous learning.

Gaining Empirical Knowledge

Empirical knowledge is the lessons learned from personal experience. **The more you experience, the more you learn.** Your college life experiences are learning opportunities. They can open your mind to new possibilities and provide different perspectives on situations and solutions. The lessons you learn experiencing life on campus will become assets and help you overcome some of your weaknesses (liabilities).

Knowledge gained from experience builds character. It can affect beliefs and influence the behaviors that make us who we are. For example, a toddler learns to trust because her parents have always filled her needs. When another child steals her toy at daycare, she discovers that you cannot trust everyone.

Because empirical knowledge comes from experience, motivating yourself to learn new skills related to your interests can quickly add to your assets. Teaching others is an excellent way of gaining experiential knowledge. Helping people can result in worthwhile and unexpected lessons learned.

To gain the most from your experiences, cultivate a healthy curiosity, get out of your comfort zone, try new things, and listen carefully to others. You might:

* Take a class outside your major
* Start conversations with people on the bus or train
* Travel
* Study a foreign language
* Taste different cuisines
* Learn to draw or paint
* Attend a classical music performance
* Play a new instrument

If you do not succeed at something you try, don’t worry. **You are not failing; you’re learning!**

Trusting Your Instincts

What many people call “instincts” are messages from the subconscious part of your brain. Your subconscious uses the assets stored in your mental database to formulate these instinctive messages. Your instincts are sharpened as you gain knowledge and experience. The more you learn from your education and experiences, the more your instinctive knowledge will be developed and valuable.

If your empirical knowledge is well-developed, it is generally wise to trust your instincts, particularly when triggered by your moral compass. Trust it if you feel something is wrong with a person or situation. Those feelings are your subconscious mind warning you.

Developing Your Moral Compass

You hold principles about right and wrong, honesty, fairness, trust, work ethics, interpersonal relationships, and more. **These beliefs are your moral compass.**

One of the great blessings and advantages of living in the U.S.A. is that our laws are based on high moral values. You do not need to seek out a particular religion to be knowledgeable about those values; they are the foundation of our laws.

How can you build a stronger moral compass?

* Consistently act based on your beliefs. Often, this requires anticipating difficult situations and deciding how to act ahead of time. Planning your response and drawing a line between acceptable and unacceptable options gives you confidence and strength.
* Work with people of strong character who are intelligent, knowledgeable, ethical, trustworthy, and highly motivated. Surrounding yourself with people who can contribute to your success is critical.
* Keep a long-term view of success and never compromise your reputation for quick gain. Do not be led astray by offers that seem too good to be true.

Courageously avoid situations that involve “dirty” business schemes. People who choose to do something illegal to “get rich quick” ignore the likelihood that they will spend time in prison and find it very difficult to get a decent job afterward.

A young person who joins a gang to make easy money from drug or gun sales seldom understands the long-term consequences of giving up an education, becoming a felon, and losing the respect of legitimate business people and their own families. A young person who resists temptation and focuses on graduating from college can establish a successful career and enjoy life-long benefits.

Resist all temptation to accept bribes or kickbacks that promise short-term rewards. Taking these shortcuts will compromise your ability to make intelligent decisions in the future. For example, a supplier offered a television to a purchasing agent if she bought a ten-year supply of unneeded, oversized paperclips. When the scheme was discovered, the TV was confiscated, and the buyer lost her job and reputation.

An excellent reputation is a priceless asset. Staying true to your values will always serve you well in life and business. When you do not deviate from your moral compass, you gain a reputation for strength and integrity. You will be respected and trusted by the people you need to work with to achieve your goals. Doors will open for you, and you can attract valuable opportunities.

Summary

As you gain knowledge through learning and experience, your goals will become more precise and better defined. When you strengthen the assets on your Mental Balance Sheet, you become better prepared to recognize and take advantage of the opportunities around you.

Self-Reflection – Module 3

1. What is the **next intellectual asset** you need to add to your Mental Balance Sheet?

1. Describe an immediate action you can take to add **experiential knowledge** to your Mental Balance Sheet.
2. What are the three most essential beliefs or values that are a part of your mental compass?

**Module 4**

**Replacing Liabilities**

Your Positive Self-image – A Critical Asset

In his acclaimed book, *Psycho-Cybernetics*, Maxwell Maltz explains the importance of a positive self-image. “The self-image sets the boundaries of individual accomplishment. It defines what you can and cannot do. Expand the self-image, and you expand the ‘area of the possible.’”[[3]](#footnote-3)

Do you have a positive self-image? If not, it is time to change that!

You already have grounds for adopting a positive self-image: you had the motivation and drive to begin working on the techniques in this book. You should be proud that you are building a platform for success. Living in the U.S.A. gives you support for a positive self-image. Opportunities surround you! You are privileged compared with people living in the rest of the world and those who lived before you.

Build up your confidence by taking on new challenges. When you are confident, your mind can be free to focus on accomplishing your goals.

Getting Rid of Barriers to Success

Avoid putting up mental barriers to your success. In his book *Empty Out The Negativ*e, Joel Osteen writes, “You weren’t created to carry around guilt, regret, bitterness, and anger - that poisons your life.”[[4]](#footnote-4) Learn to release the negative thoughts that hold you back. Let go of unproductive feelings and false judgments.

You can boost your self-image by reflecting on past successes, whether large or small.

* Did you study hard to achieve a good grade on a test?
* Have you learned a new skill or solved a complex problem?
* Has helping someone made a difference in their life?

Reinforcing positive memories increases your self-confidence and fills in the space left when you drop negative memories.

Recognizing Your Unique Gifts

Every human is born with unique gifts and the ability to survive and thrive. Have confidence that you were created to succeed!

In her book, *The Gift of Self Love,* Mary Jelkovsky writes, “Having high self-worth, on the other hand, is knowing that regardless of how you think about yourself, you are still fundamentally valuable. It is independent of your thoughts, feelings, and judgments. It recognizes that your value is intrinsic, and no matter what mistakes you make or how you feel about yourself at any given moment, nothing will change your innate value as a human being.”[[5]](#footnote-5)

Intellectual Liabilities

When reviewing the intellectual liabilities on your Mental Balance Sheet, you should identify the additional education or training you need to succeed. Whether a student or working full time, you must eliminate educational liabilities by gaining the knowledge you lack. Perhaps you must complete a college degree or participate in an apprenticeship program. For specific, required knowledge, you can study written materials. For example, the concepts taught in this book will help you leap ahead of those who have never learned them.

It is difficult to convince others to support your ideas if your arguments reveal a lack of background in a subject or situation. Do not let inadequate information keep you from realizing your dreams. You are disadvantaged when you are unaware of essential discoveries, new knowledge, and emerging theories. Creative innovators build on the lessons learned from the successes and failures of others around them. They use the experiences of others to improve their plans for success.

Formal education increases your understanding of the world. It lifts you to a higher platform of knowledge from which you can make better-informed decisions and practical plans.

Empirical Liabilities

When you eliminate behavioral liabilities by replacing negative thoughts with positive experiences, you will change your attitudes and thinking process.

Negative thought processes, beliefs, and behaviors can twist potentially powerful positive assets into negative liabilities. If you do not recognize valuable lessons from an experience, your lack of understanding can result in negative beliefs and behaviors. These will cause your subconscious to send messages that impede your ability to achieve your goals.

Rid yourself of liabilities such as:

* Unconstructive activities
  + failing to set goals
  + making unclear goals
* False beliefs
  + fear of failure
  + self-pity
  + blaming others
* Emotional baggage
  + prejudices
  + believing you are incapable

Defeating the Fear of failure

Do not be afraid to fail – it is part of the learning process.

When you learned to ride a bike, you probably failed many times before you succeeded in pedaling off on your own. Those failures were a necessary part of the learning process. Instead of failing, you were learning to succeed!

What if you had been too afraid to try and fail a few times? What if you had given up after a few falls and never learned to ride a bike? As an adult, you understand that achieving simple goals often requires trial and error. Why would you expect that larger goals should be easier to accomplish?

**Failure teaches you how to adapt to find a solution – a critical skill for a successful future.**

Changing Bad Habits

Bad habits are roadblocks to success. But saying “stop” to an existing habit isn’t nearly as effective as deciding to “move forward” with a new, positive behavior. By consciously replacing a bad habit with positive change, your subconscious receives affirming messages rather than punishing thoughts. Instead of fighting against a bad habit, your conscious and subconscious positively focus on building a new asset.

For example, our high school graduate in Module 2 can replace the liability of “wasting valuable time and mental energy online with social media or gaming” by implementing a daily schedule to accomplish goals efficiently.

If a person follows through with a new behavior for 21 days, it becomes a habit. If that behavior continues for 90 days, it becomes a lifestyle change. The asset “Uses a daily schedule to plan for study, exercise, recreation, and sleep” will eventually be added to the student’s Mental Balance Sheet.

Summary

Becoming skilled at dispelling non-productive beliefs and behaviors is critical for future success. Negative beliefs are unnecessary and wasteful distractions. They are roadblocks to your success. Target the liabilities on your Mental Balance Sheet one by one and turn them into assets that add to your personal wealth.

Self-Reflection – Module 4

Describe two successful experiences (e.g., you solved a problem, settled a dispute, scored a winning point in a game, did well on an assignment, or were selected to be part of something.) Then, explain how you benefitted from each success and what you learned about yourself.

1)

2)

Describe a bad habit that you would like to change. Think of a positive behavior that could replace it.

Bad Habit –

Alternate Positive Behavior -

**Module 5**

**Becoming a Master Adaptive Learner**

Our world is rapidly changing, and the pace of innovation has accelerated.

* From 2015 through 2020, the U.S. Patent Office granted 1.446 million patents - more than double the 705 thousand patents granted between 1995 and 2000.[[6]](#footnote-6)
* In 2000, the fastest supercomputers could handle almost 10 billion operations per second. By 2021, that number had risen to more than 100 quadrillions!
* Meanwhile, the cost of technology continues to decrease. For example, the price of computer memory dropped from $100 per megabyte in 1990 to less than 1 cent per megabyte in 2020.[[7]](#footnote-7)

New technology is being deployed in ways that change our lives. The increasing use of AI and robotics affects job opportunities. Entrepreneur Magazine reported, “By some estimates, nearly half the jobs of today will be in some way impacted by the role of machines that will have the ability to learn and adapt.”[[8]](#footnote-8)

To remain relevant, you must be aware of and learn from shifts in the market and the world around you. Your success depends on how you handle new developments. They can either increase your personal assets (if you are forward-thinking and adjust) or create additional liabilities (if you do not adapt and are “left behind” by your peers and the rest of the world.)

The only way to benefit from rapid change is to become a Master Adaptive Learner.

What is Adaptive Learning?

Your future success depends on your understanding of new developments and adapting effectively. Master Adaptive Learners adopt a mindset of continuous learning. They follow market innovations to take advantage of emerging opportunities. Knowledge and understanding empower them in our dynamic environment. To become a Master Adaptive Learner and remain competitive, continuous learning must become a lifelong strategy.

Adaptive learning means understanding and learning from feedback and positive (or negative) reinforcement and then using that knowledge to adapt plans. Master Adaptive Learners pay close attention to lessons learned from the changing environment. Then they modify their strategies and tactics and continue to monitor their progress.

Businesses Must Also Learn and Adapt

Computers are practical adaptive learners. The computers that run internet search engines, retail websites, and social media platforms are programmed to learn from your online behavior. They adapt to your preferences and produce search results and advertisements customized to your taste. Adaptive learning is critical to the success of these companies.

Traditional businesses have failed because their leaders did not adapt to changes in the market. Blockbuster Video is a famous example.

In 1985, Blockbuster opened its first video rental store in Dallas. By 1992, the company had become the industry leader, with 2800 stores operating worldwide. Then, in 1997, Silicon Valley veteran Reed Hastings founded Netflix, partly out of his frustration with Blockbuster for charging him $40 in late fees.

The original Netflix model was to rent DVDs to its monthly subscribers. Borrowers ordered videos on the Netflix website and received and returned them by mail. They completely avoided the hassle of visiting a store. Netflix’s rapid growth was proof of the strength of its strategy.

The leadership team at Blockbuster needed to understand the importance of adapting its business model to meet customer demands. In 2000, Blockbuster even turned down the opportunity to buy Netflix and use it as their online platform!

Although Blockbuster reached its peak in 2004, with more than 9,000 stores worldwide, the company filed for bankruptcy protection only six years later with $1 billion in debt.

Ultimately, Blockbuster’s leaders failed to benefit from two important lessons:

1. Knowing your competition is critical. (Blockbuster ignored the power of Netflix’s strategy)
2. Adapting to provide additional value to your customers and shareholders is critical.

How Adaptive Learning Works

Adaptive learning must be continuous to sustain and increase success.

Netflix continued to adapt to the market. As the popularity of traditional television declined, Netflix evolved from a mail-order DVD rental business into a worldwide entertainment platform. They now broadcast via the internet to approximately 223 million subscribers in 190 countries. They also develop their own content, producing movies and television programs for various cultures and languages.

Amazon is another success story. Established as an online bookseller in 1995, it quickly adapted to customer needs, adding electronic publishing and distribution to its services and expanding online sales in dozens of new categories.

In 2017, Amazon entered the retail grocery industry by purchasing Whole Foods and creating Amazon Fresh. Using its expertise in logistics and its fleet of delivery trucks, Amazon began to offer same-day grocery delivery. In 2020, Amazon Fresh opened its first cashier-less grocery store. The store uses cameras and electronic sensors to manage a system that automatically charges customer purchases to their Amazon accounts. Thus, shoppers avoid checkout lines and “walk out” the door.

Both Netflix and Amazon succeeded because they focused on evolving customer needs while adjusting to rapid changes in the business environment. They continually learned from experience, took calculated risks, and adapted to meet the needs of the ever-changing market. Even while implementing new strategies, they adjusted their plans to ensure success. Their new endeavors may not have been profitable initially, but the companies remained focused and became market leaders.

How can **you** become a Master Adaptive Learner?

When adding assets to your Mental Balance Sheet, you are practicing “continuous learning.” When you improve your behaviors and eliminate your liabilities, you are “adapting” to what you have learned. To become a Master Adaptive Learner, you must commit to doing both. Use the lessons you learn from failures and successes to adapt your strategies and continually improve your performance.

Do not be discouraged when challenges arise. Instead, face them with enthusiasm.

Appreciate small successes and gain the confidence that, by learning and adapting, you will come closer to your goal.

Recognize that “You Don’t Know What You Don’t Know”

Have you ever broken a rule because you never heard of it? Perhaps this happened while playing a game or learning to drive. If so, you know the feeling that “You don’t know what you don’t know.” You learned the rule and gained new knowledge through life experience!

You may have heard the saying, “ignorance is bliss” – if you don’t know what’s happening around you, you won’t be anxious about the potential hazards. However, **ignorance also means missing potential opportunities and passing up on great experiences.**

Master Adaptive Learners know that there is always something valuable they could learn. There is information available that can improve their plans. They understand clearly that “they don’t yet know what they don’t know!”

For example, as you read this book, you will come across words or terms that are new to you. In other words, you didn’t know that you didn’t know them! As a Master Adaptive Learner, do not skip over a new word; take the opportunity to add it to your vocabulary!

First, underline a new word and use the Glossary or a dictionary to determine its meaning. Then, pronounce and write it down a few times. Finally, reread the passage where you found it, keeping the proper definition in mind. This process of reinforcing new knowledge will improve the chance that the word will be permanently stored in your memory bank.

The best way to discover and learn what you do not already know is to obtain experience outside your comfort zone. Reach out for new opportunities. Cultivate a healthy curiosity about the world, and look for answers in unexpected places.

Master Adaptive Learners seek out new information. They never lose their enthusiasm for discovery. They never grow complacent or assume there is nothing important left to learn.

Self-Reflection – Module 5

1. Describe a valuable experience and the lesson it taught you.
2. Describe a situation when you had to adapt your plans or tactics to achieve a desired result.
3. What can you do to become more aware of changes in the world that may affect your ability to reach your goal?

Make a list of new words and terms you have encountered in this book and provide short definitions.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **New Word** | **Definition** |
| empirical | based on observation, experience, or experimentation |
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**Module 6**

**Setting and Achieving Goals – The Mind Roadmap**

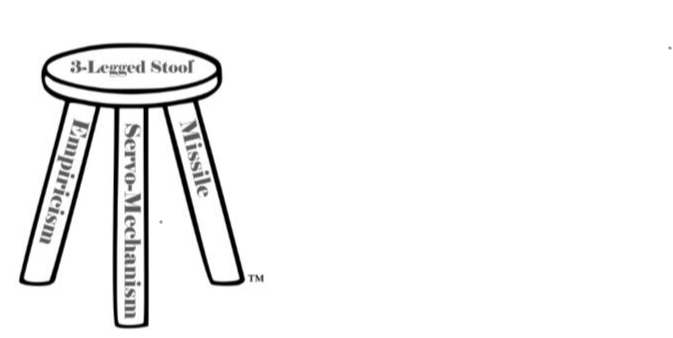
The brain and nervous system constitute a complex goal-striving mechanism. It can act as a built-in automatic guidance system for achieving your goals.[[9]](#footnote-9)

The Fleischer “Mind Roadmap” is a powerful and dynamic model for setting goals and achieving success. If you learn how to use it, it will serve you well throughout your career and your life.

Developing The Mind Roadmap

When Morton Fleischer left college, he served in the U.S. Army, becoming a Launching Control Officer for guided missiles. During his training, it occurred to him that the way guided missiles work provides an excellent analogy for the mental process involved in accomplishing goals.

Here’s how guided missiles work: Knowledge and training (Empiricism) help the officer set a target. The computer system calculates the trajectory, and the officer takes action by firing the missile. The radar systems monitor the missile’s progress and use the servomechanism in the missile to correct its course.



The Mind Roadmap

Fleischer chose to represent this process by creating “The Mind Roadmap.” He modeled it after a three-legged stool. Each leg describes a step in the decision process. Here is how it works:

*Empiricism (Knowledge) is used to determine the target.*

You use your accumulated knowledge to identify and clearly define the goal you wish to achieve.

*The Servomechanism (as a Creative Mechanism)[[10]](#footnote-10) calculates a trajectory.*

You allow the “servomechanism” part of your brain to act as a “creative mechanism” that sifts through your stored knowledge to formulate solutions for reaching your goal.

*Missile - Take action!*

You implement your solution and start working toward your goal.

*The Servomechanism (as a Success Mechanism)[[11]](#footnote-11) functions like radar and sends messages to adjust and guide the missile to its target.*

You continually monitor the results of your actions and allow your mind’s servomechanism to function as a “success mechanism.” It can identify problems and suggest the adjustments needed to reach your goal.

Determining Your Goal

The two primary functions of consciousness are to gather knowledge and identify future goals. Don’t forget; you don’t know what you don’t know!

Before setting your goal, set a time limit for your research to avoid “analysis paralysis.”

Once information is stored in your memory, The conscious mind’s job is to evaluate ideas and tactics your unconscious mind suggests to determine which are “good” or “bad.” The conscious mind makes the final decision about your goal.

What is a Servomechanism?

A servomechanism is “an automatic device used to correct the performance of a mechanism utilizing error-sensing feedback.” The term “…properly applies only to systems in which the feedback and error-correction signals control mechanical position or one of its derivatives, such as velocity or acceleration.”[[12]](#footnote-12)

Guided missiles are only one example of machines that use servomechanisms. The development of autonomous cars depends heavily on a variety of servomechanisms. Some of this technology is already implemented in today’s cars. Adaptive Cruise Control (ACC) automatically maintains a safe distance between the driver’s car and the car in front. Lane-Centering Steering automatically nudges the vehicle back into its lane when it crosses a lane marking.

Your Unconscious Mind is a Sophisticated Servomechanism

“Research has demonstrated the existence of several independent unconscious behavioral guidance systems: perceptual, evaluative, and motivational.”[[13]](#footnote-13)

Your unconscious mind is a sophisticated servomechanism. It functions automatically to maintain physical health and creatively produce new ideas and solutions. It scans your stored knowledge to find answers to achieve your goals.

Your unconscious mind serves to:

* control and monitor your bodily systems and warn your conscious mind of problems (e.g., pain).
* evaluate your needs and prompt your conscious mind to fulfill them (e.g., hunger).
* guide your social behavior and mental reactions (e.g., emotions)
* signal the need for adapting to change
* control your physical and mental reactions to your surroundings (e.g., fight or flight)
* formulate ideas and solutions to help you reach your goals.

There are many ways in which your unconscious mind functions on your behalf. For example,

* When something “clicks” and you come up with an idea for a paper you are writing, your unconscious mind generated that idea.
* When you reach for a pencil rolling off a table, your unconscious mind adjusts your body to catch it.
* When you drive a car, your unconscious mind operates the vehicle and adapts to normal circumstances without needing to engage your conscious mind.

The unconscious mind is flexible. It works 24 hours a day using the assets on your Mental Balance sheet and stored in your memory.

The Unconscious Mind’s Creative Mechanism

Your unconscious servomechanism does much more than react automatically to changing situations. It is naturally driven to help you achieve your conscious goals. Once you set a goal, your unconscious mind is sophisticated enough to act as a “creative mechanism,” generating ideas and action plans so that your conscious mind can choose the best solution.

Feeding your mind with knowledge makes your creative mechanism more powerful. Building your self-image by focusing on past successes helps your creative mechanism think positively.

Your creative mind is always working. You can think about a problem before you fall asleep and let your creative mechanism work while you rest. You can keep a pen and paper by your bedside to use when you wake up with a great idea. Ideas may come to you when relaxing, taking a shower, or during your daily commute. Walking is a great way to relax your mind and allow the unconscious to work.

Once you consider the options your unconscious mind provides, choose a solution you believe in and take action!

The Unconscious Mind’s Success Mechanism

Your unconscious mind also serves as a success mechanism that uses your knowledge, information, experiences, failures, successes, and education to improve your tactics for reaching your goals.

Remember, your mind is a goal-striving mechanism dedicated to achieving your goals. Once you have taken initial action, you need to monitor the results and gather performance data so your built-in success mechanism can help you adapt to changing circumstances.

Continuous Decision Making

Your ultimate success depends upon the ongoing relationship between the concepts represented on the Mind Map stool.

Trial and error work like this:

1. Action is taken.
2. Your mind’s servomechanism functions as a success mechanism that monitors progress and results.
3. When failure occurs, your mind’s servomechanism functions as a creative mechanism to generate ideas for adaptation.
4. Your consciousness selects the best idea, and the cycle begins again.

To see an example of a complete Mind Map, See Appendix A.

Self-Reflection – Module 6

List three of your goals for the upcoming year.

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Choose one of your goals, then use your mind’s creative mechanism to suggest tactics for achieving that goal.

Goal \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Potential Tactics:

How will you know whether your tactics are working? What can you monitor?

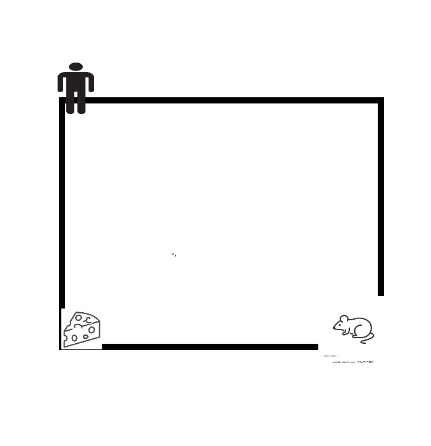
**Module 7**

**The Road to Success**

Stay Focused on Your Goal

Your unconscious success mechanism is most powerful when you focus on your goal and avoid distractions.

The problem of the man, the mouse, and the cheese illustrates this concept. A piece of cheese is wedged in the corner of a square room. A man stands in one corner, and a mouse crouches opposite. Who is going to retrieve the cheese first?



Before acting, the human is likely to think: *Why is there a piece of cheese in the corner? Who put it there? Should I pick it up?*

The mouse is not distracted. It does not worry about every detail or ask whether it should pick up the cheese. It takes one sniff and rushes to grab it and hide. The mouse is not afraid to leave its comfort zone and run across the room to compete with a human. Therefore, it always gets the cheese!

Fear of failure or making mistakes causes humans to hesitate, over-evaluate, and resist change instead of deciding promptly, being highly motivated, and trusting their judgment.

**If you are easily distracted from your goals, you must program your servomechanism properly.**

Perfectionism – Analysis Paralysis (AP)

There is no such thing as a perfect solution. Solutions are never 100% good or bad. They are simply our best efforts toward reaching our goals in an uncertain future.

While many factors should be considered before making a final plan, overthinking decisions is paralyzing. “Analysis Paralysis” stems from a fear of failure and being judged by others. It is a form of anxiety that will short-circuit your progress.

**The most important thing is to take action!** Master Adaptive Learners know you learn every time you try a new skill, change existing conditions, or explore outside your comfort zone. Whether a success or a failure, each attempt teaches you something and brings you closer to your goal.

In the previous Module, you learned about the power of your unconscious servomechanism. Let it work for you. **Do not force decisions. That is unproductive.** Stay focused on your goal and trust your unconscious success mechanism to digest new information, compare it to the knowledge in your memory bank, and generate workable plans for reaching your goals.

Operating Your Unconscious Success Mechanism

Malcolm Maltz’s book, Psycho-cybernetics, emphasizes the following five fundamental principles by which your success mechanism operates.

1. **Your built-in success mechanism must have a goal or “target.”** Visualize your goal, and make it as real as possible, as if it already exists.
2. **Your automatic mechanism must be focused on that goal and its end results.** Do not be discouraged if the means or tactics for reaching your goal are unclear. Focus on the result, and your success mechanism will often take care of how it will be achieved.
3. **Do not be afraid of making mistakes or of temporary failures.** All servomechanisms achieve a goal by recognizing negative feedback and making corrections.
4. **Skill learning is accomplished by trial and error**, by mentally correcting your aim until successful performance has been achieved. Continued learning and success are accomplished **by *forgetting past mistakes and remembering the successful response***so it can be imitated.
5. **Learn to trust your creative mechanism to do its work and act as if the answers are there.** Its nature is to operate *spontaneously* according to *present needs*. Do not “jam” it by becoming too anxious or concerned or attempting to force it through too much conscious effort. You must “let” it work rather than “make” it work.[[14]](#footnote-14)

Memorizing and focusing on these 5 five principles will free your mind from roadblocks. You will become a more creative problem-solver and find that setting life goals comes more naturally.

Refining Your Goals

Every time you try something, you build experiential knowledge and feed valuable information to your unconscious mind. As you learn from experience, your goal will become more clearly defined. You will better understand what is possible and what works.

For example, your strategies and tactics will become more targeted and refined by learning more about market competitors and increasing your knowledge of customer needs and desires. You will begin to track results more effectively.

As Morton Fleischer wrote, “My definition of luck is when opportunity meets preparedness.”[[15]](#footnote-15) Each action you take will provide knowledge for your Mental Balance Sheet that better prepares you for new opportunities. You will grow more capable and creative, designing new tactics for reaching your goal.

Never Give Up!

“If you want to succeed, you have to have a goal, fight for that goal, and keep fighting for it.

You can never give up no matter how tough the going gets.”[[16]](#footnote-16)

Do not be discouraged when the road gets bumpy. Expect to encounter adversity, obstacles, and challenges in your business endeavors. Be grateful for the lessons you learn from each one, and keep moving.

When you believe that you can accomplish something meaningful in your life, that belief will keep you strong. Take steps to become a Master Adaptive Learner and gain valuable knowledge. Replace your mental liabilities with positive habits and beliefs. Trust your unconscious servomechanism, recognize its valuable creative solutions, and gain the confidence to tackle new challenges.

“Man is by nature a goal-striving being. And because man is “built that way,” he is not happy unless he is functioning as he was made to function—as a goal striver. Thus, true success and true happiness not only go together, but each enhances the other.”[[17]](#footnote-17)

Self-Reflection – Module 7

Do you often behave like a perfectionist?

1 2 3 4

Never Rarely Sometimes Often

Do you procrastinate because you worry you will not be good enough?

1 2 3 4

Never Rarely Sometimes Often

Do you trust your instincts when action needs to be taken?

1 2 3 4

Never Rarely Sometimes Often

Do you ever hesitate to decide until it was too late?

1 2 3 4

Never Rarely Sometimes Often

Review your responses. Reread the Module if you have answered “Sometimes” or “Often” more than once. Then list the things you need to work on and your potential actions.

Describe a skill you learned primarily through trial and error.

What do you do when you feel “stuck” and have trouble making a decision?

**Module 8**

**Interviewing for College Admissions**

You may work with teachers or coaches who believe in you and guide your growth. You can rely on family members or friends that support you and encourage you to pursue your goals. But those people cannot reach your goal for you**.**

**The person who must believe and care the most about reaching your goal is you.**

You need to be your best advocate and demonstrate your value. It is up to you to convince listeners that your talents, ideas, and goals are worthy of support. To achieve that on your own, you must have self-confidence - take pride in yourself and who you are.

Healthy self-confidence includes valuing and caring for your needs, wants, and desires. Taking pride in yourself does not mean being selfish. Instead, it means believing in yourself and taking responsibility for the work it will take to reach your goal.

Tchiki Davis, MA. PhD. of the Berkeley Well-Being Institute writes, “When we love ourselves, we appreciate our worth or value. We don’t need affirmation from others, and we don’t need them to tell us that we are good enough, smart enough, attractive enough—we simply know.” [[18]](#footnote-18)

Your self-confidence will encourage others to trust and believe in you when the time comes for you to promote your ideas.

Preparation and Repetition Builds Self-confidence

Before actors go to an audition, they work diligently with teachers and coaches to improve their skills. They rehearse their lines and movements in front of a mirror. Their careful preparation and repetition increase their self-confidence. Repetitive practice ensures that when unexpected variables arise (nervousness, interruptions, physical settings), actors can perform nearly as well as they did in practice.

Interviews for college admissions are like auditions. You can perform well by preparing and rehearsing following these guidelines:

* Know Your Target

Learn everything you can about the college. How big is it? What is their mission statement? What are their current goals? What is the environment like there? Does the school actively promote student diversity? What are the most important programs at the college? The knowledge you gather will help you prepare answers to questions asked during your interview. It will help you identify questions that you will want to ask.

* Know Your Goal

Know precisely what you hope to achieve at that college (i.e., admission to a specific department or major, studying with a particular professor, focusing on a specific topic) and how you will work to reach your goal and graduate.

* Know Your Answers

Prepare yourself to answer common interview questions. Then imagine other questions specific to your goal or situation and prepare those answers. Rehearse your answers out loud. Repeat them until they become automatic. Careful preparation will help you avoid stumbling, hesitating, and appearing as if you had never considered a question.

**Common college interview questions include:**

Why do you want to attend our university?

What do you want to study and why?

How did you gain an interest in your area of study?

What achievement are you most proud of?

How would you describe yourself?

How would your friends describe you?

What do you do in your spare time?

What are you currently reading?

What is your greatest strength?

What is your greatest weakness?

What will you do after graduation?

Why should we accept you as a student?

* Demonstrate Your Potential

Why do colleges want to interview potential students? They already know your grades, test scores, and references. They want to determine what motivates you and then predict your future performance.

A Harvard Business Review Study concluded, “People are much more impressed, whether they realize it or not, by your potential than by your track record.”[[19]](#footnote-19)  In other words, interviewers are looking for your drive, your belief in yourself, and your determination to succeed. You can demonstrate your motivation through the energy and enthusiasm you display during your interview. When you are confident in your future performance, interviewers will be more confident in their decision to accept you.

Self-Reflection – Module 8

Are you hesitant to interview with college counselors? If so, why?

Why do colleges interview prospective students?

What do you want admissions officers to know about you? (Beyond what appears on your written application.)

What questions would you like to ask an admissions officer?

Before an interview, what steps would you take to ensure you will not be nervous?

**Module 9**

**The Art of Communication**

Communication is the sharing and receiving of information. It can be written, verbal, visual, and even physical. Good communication begins with knowledge and preparation but also requires listening skills and an awareness of human behavior.

Face-to-Face Communication

To improve the strength and professionalism of your face-to-face communication skills, follow these basic guidelines:

* Know your Subject Matter

Have a thorough understanding of your subject before you craft your message. Listeners will always have doubts and questions. Be prepared to provide convincing answers based on careful thought and available data.

* Practice Your Presentation

Whether preparing for an interview, a presentation, or a business meeting, practice what you plan to present and your responses to questions. Rehearse with a colleague, a friend, a family member, or a trusted advisor, and encourage them to ask questions.

* Speak Clearly and Concisely

Be polite, but get to the point. If you ramble, listeners will feel their time is being wasted the atmosphere will become negative.

* Break the Habit of Using Crutch Words

If you habitually use unnecessary words, such as “um,” “like,” “right,” or “you know,” break the habit now! Crutch words fatigue listeners and interrupt their train of thought. Thoughtless filler words destroy the listener’s confidence in you and make you appear incompetent.

When answering questions, never begin your responses with crutch words such as “so” or “absolutely!” You will sound insecure and potentially childish. Answer clearly and directly. Do not destroy your listener’s image of your capabilities.

Suggestions for breaking the habit can be found at <https://hbr.org/2018/08/how-to-stop-saying-um-ah-and-you-know>.

* Personalize Your Communication

Make eye contact with your listener. Smile. Use listeners’ names when possible. Be attentive when someone speaks to you or asks a question. Nod and smile to demonstrate your understanding.

* Become an Active Listener

“Active listening is a way of listening and responding to another person that improves mutual understanding.”[[20]](#footnote-20) Learn to actively work to better understand a speaker’s message. Some basic techniques include:

* + Making eye contact, whether listening or speaking.
  + Giving your complete attention to a speaker.
  + Not interrupting a speaker.
  + Asking pertinent questions
  + Restating the speaker’s meaning in their own words to clarify and verify understanding.
  + Waiting quietly for an answer after asking a question.

There are many internet sites that describe specific active listening techniques in detail, including <https://www.rochester.edu/emerging-leaders/how-to-become-an-active-listener/>.

* Be Aware of Non-verbal Communication

Body language is the non-verbal signals we send via our facial expressions, eyes, mouth, arms and legs, gestures, posture, and use of personal space that unconsciously communicate our feelings, reactions, understanding, and level of agreement.

Paying attention to the body language of others will help you “read” a person’s reactions before anything is said. It may help you alter your presentation to improve its effectiveness or let you know when it is time to ask a closing question. Often, body language reveals truths that people are reluctant to voice.

Positive body language can help you earn the trust of a listener or a speaker. It can be used to emphasize a point.

Be aware of cultural differences in body language. For example, allowing for a large amount of personal space is more common in Asia than in South America.

Learning body language requires time and effort. Free information can be found on the internet at such sites as <https://fremont.edu/how-to-read-body-language-revealing-the-secrets-behind-common-nonverbal-cues/>.

The Power of Asking Questions

* Ask Questions to Generate Interest

People resist change. Your idea or request may be rejected because listeners are concerned that it will force them to deal with change. Instead, asking someone for help can be very effective. Try saying, “Can you help me with an idea I have?” or “Can you help me understand whether my idea will work?” Asking for help may open the door to a broad and open discussion about the subject you want to present.

* Ask Questions to Gauge Understanding

Whenever you introduce a new idea or give an explanation, follow it up with the question, “Am I being clear?” Monitor listeners’ body language (facial expression, posture, arms, and legs); it may indicate confusion or disbelief. When listeners appear confused, ask if they clearly understand your message and provide any needed clarification. You can be sure that listeners who remained silent will also be grateful for your explanation.

* Ask Questions to Determine Agreement

You can’t convince listeners if you don’t know what they are thinking. Questioning listeners allows you to find out whether they agree or disagree.

After completing an introduction to your subject, making an important point, or giving an explanation, ask, “What do you think of that?” Respond succinctly and accurately if objections are raised or clarifying questions are asked.

* Ask Closing Questions and Wait

Always ask a closing question after explaining an idea or making a point. Establish an achievable goal, and ask, “Do you think the suggestion will work?” Then wait for an answer, no matter how long it takes! It helps to imagine that the next person who speaks loses. This will make waiting will be easier.

If there are objections or suggestions, discuss them before continuing your presentation. If the person agrees with you, move on. When your presentation is finished, and all questions have been answered, ask whether the person agrees with you, is ready to purchase your product, or will invest in your company.

Electronic vs. Face-to-Face Communication

The increasing use of electronic email and cell phone messaging has resulted in a growing reluctance to engage in face-to-face communication. Some people even fear face-to-face contact, particularly when conflicting ideas or opinions are to be discussed. “Social anxiety” and “communication apprehension” are becoming common, particularly after months of isolation caused by contagious illnesses and epidemics.

**It is essential to recognize that electronic communication is unsuitable for promoting yourself or your ideas.** Expert face-to-face communication is always more effective when attempting to convince others. It is the most potent communication tool for reaching your goal. If necessary, video conferencing is preferable to telephone alone.

When electronic communication is unavoidable, follow these guidelines:

* + Never use emojis in formal correspondence.
  + Never send emails or messages written when you are angry or written late at night. If you compose a message in the evening, reread it in the morning and edit it before sending it (particularly if you were upset or angry when you wrote it!)
  + Use electronic communication to arrange meetings or send documents, but avoid introducing ideas that require explanation. Readers will skim the information, which will be more easily rejected. Essential discussions should occur face-to-face or over the phone if distance makes it impractical.

Advanced Communication - Promoting Ideas and Products

To acquire effective persuasive skills, you must first master all of the communication techniques in the previous Module and those discussed up to this point in this Module.

The key to persuasive communication is to remember that decisions are difficult for some people to make and that it is human nature to resist change. Therefore, specialized knowledge and preparation are required to convince others to consider and accept your ideas, to purchase your products or services, or to persuade them to invest in your company. Practice and experience will help you understand how people receive and process information and decide.

Promoting ideas and products can only begin once you have gained the attention and interest of valuable prospects. Then you must deliver a solid, engaging presentation.

The following guidelines introduce the advanced skills and expertise you will need to become highly persuasive.

* Use Third-party Referrals

A recommendation by a trusted friend or colleague is the best way to get a meeting and establish immediate credibility with a prospect. If a third party is willing to support your efforts by connecting you with a prospect, be prepared to take advantage of the opportunity.

* Set the Stage

Before you present any information to a prospect, ask for their permission and attention. Say, “I have a new idea (product); may I explain it?” When the prospect agrees, explain your idea or the benefits of your product. Then ask,” What do you think?” and wait patiently for their answer.

* Qualify the Prospect

Establish whether the prospect (the person you are meeting with) has funds available for the investment you seek and the authority to make a final decision. For example, if you are looking for funding, ask the prospect whether, if you presented them with an exceptional opportunity, they would be able to invest $100,000. If not, continue asking and reducing the investment amount until the prospect says “yes” to an amount you could work with. Such questions help you avoid taking time to make a full presentation, and the prospect says,” I don’t have any money to invest.”

* Know the Details Inside and Out

Whether you are promoting an idea or a product, when money is involved, you should expect lots of questions.

To gain a prospect’s trust, you must always have an intelligent, detailed answer to every question. You will lose credibility and respect if you do not know the answer to an important question. To avoid such situations, carefully study and memorize all critical information before your meeting. If you do not know the answer to a question, **Do Not Bluff!** Tell the prospect you will find the correct answer and give them that information as soon as possible.

* Practice Your Presentation

Train your brain and nervous system on how to feel and react during a presentation by repeating it until it is memorized. Practice in front of a mirror. Practice in front of someone else. Practice selling the benefits of your product or idea until you can start at the middle, beginning, or end of your presentation and speak with enthusiasm and confidence. Then you will have “programmed” your mind and body so you will exhibit polish and confidence during the actual presentation.

* Role-play

Think of all the questions someone might ask or their objections to your idea or product. Imagine the wildest kind of curveballs. Create solutions in your mind until you know what to say and what to do whenever the question arises. No matter the situation, you can prepare for it beforehand and handle it properly in person.

* Make a Good First Impression

It is essential to make an excellent first impression. Dress correctly and pay attention to grooming. Smile easily and often—physically project positivity and confidence.

* Offer a Solution

If your product or idea can solve a prospect’s problem, you will capture their attention and have a better chance of reaching an agreement.

* Build Listener’s Confidence in You

Tell a convincing story. Listeners want to hear from a person who makes them feel everything will be all right. People will like you because of how you make them feel when with you.

* Do Not Avoid Issues

If the prospect is likely to object to issues or aspects of your idea or product, bring them up as early as possible and eliminate them.

* Be Excited and Enthusiastic

Speak energetically as you describe the value of your idea or product. Your audience wants to be thrilled, not bored. Genuine excitement and enthusiasm can be contagious. People are always more interested in **why** you are doing something (your passion) rather than **what** (the details) you are doing.

* Stay Focused on your Goal

Ignore minutia or the small things that could derail your efforts. Focus on how you can get where you want to be. Allow your subconscious goal-seeking mechanism to give you the answers.

* Be Persistent

Do not give up. Be sure to thank the prospect the day after your meeting. Quickly follow up on any promises (i.e., formal proposals, additional information.) Contact the prospect again to arrange a follow-up meeting if the decision is pending. Be aware that you are competing with other providers with alternate ideas or methods.

The Elevator Pitch

An elevator pitch is a brief (30 seconds at most) description of your idea, product, or company. It is used to capture the interest of someone with little time to listen (an elevator trip.) Your pitch can be an introduction to your idea or a critical point.

A good elevator pitch is intriguing. It creates listeners’ desire to know more. There is no time for fluff or background information in a pitch. Your words must be powerful and strategic. It must be memorized to make it second nature.

You must have your elevator pitch on the tip of your tongue to reach specific goals. Then you will not be surprised the next time someone important says, “Give me your elevator pitch.”

Learning by Doing

Communication occurs when information is transferred from the sender to the receiver. It requires interaction with others.

Your ability to reach any goal depends heavily on how you express yourself. When communicating, the sender is responsible for the thoroughness and clarity of the message. The receiver is responsible for verifying or clarifying their understanding. It is a complex exchange that is only sometimes successful.

It is impossible to acquire excellent communication skills working by yourself. It takes time and the cooperation of others. Be patient with your progress. Take advantage of every opportunity. Focus on improving your written, verbal, and non-verbal communication skills. Work on communicating with people of all ages and backgrounds face-to-face, over the phone, and electronically.

Self-Reflection – Module 9

1. Why should you ask questions when you are communicating face-to-face? List at least three reasons.
2. Briefly describe how each technique is used in a presentation.

Personalization

Non-verbal communication

Active Listening

1. What “crutch words” do you commonly use? How could you avoid using them?
2. How can you prevent yourself from sending an inappropriate email or text message?
3. Write an elevator pitch to introduce yourself and explain why you should attend that college. Write it as if you are briefly in an elevator with the head of the admissions department.

**Module 10**

**Leadership Skills**

Leadership Skills are Life Skills

Managers are not “taught” leadership skills when they are hired. They develop leadership skills long before they are offered a management position. These skills are usually learned through interactions at school or work.

Many of the following terms may appear as assets or liabilities on your current Mental Balance Sheet. To achieve your goal, you must acquire or improve the assets described in this Module.

Moral Compass Assets

Honesty – Seeking truth, speaking the truth, valuing the truth.

Integrity – Having a solid set of values and standing by them, even when no one is watching. Making ethical choices and living up to company standards.

Confidentiality – Being trustworthy. Being able to work with and protect confidential information safely.

Empirical/Experiential Knowledge Assets

Some leadership skills are behavioral and are developed through experience.

Positive attitude – having enough self-esteem to work with others to create a positive environment, handle pressure, and resolve conflict - motivating self and others.

Reliability/Dependability – proving a solid work ethic, coming to work every day, being on time, never calling in at the last minute, meeting deadlines, completing high-quality work, being productive, and having a backup plan.

Flexibility/Adaptability – Being open to change, feedback, and criticism and working the hours when needed (including extra hours or days).at times Proposing new courses of action to meet changing situations. (See p. 18)

Relationship Building – Collaborating, team building, conflict resolution, delegating, supporting, empathizing.

Self-Awareness – Assessing and improving your abilities and recognizing your strengths, weaknesses, values, biases, and personal perspectives. (In short, maintaining your Mental Balance Sheet. See Modules 3 and 4)

Mind Map Skills

Several leadership skills rely upon your ability to use The Fleischer Mind Map.

Critical Thinking/Problem solving – (This is the fundamental job of The Mind Map See pp. 22-23)

Decisiveness – Acting promptly. (See pp. 24-25)

Creativity/Innovation – Making plans in uncertain situations, thinking outside the box, and being open to new ideas and solutions. (This is the fundamental job of your creative mechanism. See pp. 22-25)

Academic Knowledge Assets

Some leadership skills require formal training.

Communication – Properly utilize active listening, written, verbal, nonverbal, and presentation skills. (See pp. 9-10)

Teaching/Mentoring – Assessing needs, presenting information clearly and effectively, motivating and inspiring others.

Teamwork Skills

It can be challenging to work as part of a team. But some basic rules can make you more effective and valuable as a team member.

1. Show respect for the people you work with.
2. Be courageous and demonstrate a strong character.
3. Take responsibility for your role and hold yourself accountable.
4. Keep a positive attitude and help to motivate others.
5. Listen and keep an open mind.
6. Adapt.
7. Learn by asking questions.
8. Ask for HELP when you need it.

When building a team, it is important to include members with various strengths and skill sets. The best groups are also diverse in gender and background. Having too many similar people on a team may reduce creative thinking and result in poor decisions because of “groupthink.”

Your ability to use Fleischer’s Mind Road Map will make you a valuable part of any project. Never close off your unconscious servomechanism out of the fear of offending others. If you believe in an idea – present it! If you notice problems as a project progresses, let your success mechanism suggest effective changes and share those with the team.

Becoming a Master Adaptive Learner who incorporates the Mind Map process into your thinking is essential to prepare yourself for leadership.

The Problem of Absenteeism

From School

If you miss more than ten school days in a year, that could be called “chronic absenteeism.” Frequent absences from school can affect success as an adult. It endangers your chances of graduating with the grades and skills you need to be accepted at a college and complete a degree.

From Work

Chronic absenteeism lowers your performance, damages your team’s morale, and hurts a company’s ability to provide its products and services and make a profit.

If you establish a pattern of missing work without submitting time off in advance, you may not be paid for your time off. In addition, most employees in the U.S. are considered “employed at will,” in other words, an employer can fire them for almost any reason—or no reason at all. Most importantly, absenteeism spoils your reputation for dependability and ruins your chances of getting a positive referral from an employer for your next job.

Self-Reflection – Module 10

How often do you miss school or skip classes (for whatever reason)?

1 2 3 4

Never Rarely 2-3 times a month more than two weeks in a school year

Have you ever stayed after school or worked over the weekend to complete a group project, play a sport, work on a performance, etc.? Give an example.

In a conversation, do you wait till a person has finished speaking before commenting?

1 2 3 4

Always Usually Often Rarely

Do you have experience working on a team? What were the most difficult challenges?

**Module 11**

**Careers**

Gain Knowledge – Look for Opportunity

As the economy changes, job demands evolve, and new businesses and opportunities appear in the market. Today’s career paths often involve working in various positions at different organizations.

When you take a job, view it as an opportunity to learn. Look for a job that is a stepping stone to your goal. Spend at least a year in each organization and learn everything you can. Then, if you find that your work is not leading you closer to your goal, you will be better prepared to look for a better opportunity.

Money should be a byproduct of your work, not the ultimate goal. Money is necessary for reaching your goals and building a rewarding life. Never sacrifice long-term wealth, stability, and happiness for shallow, short-term rewards.

Strive for the best opportunity. The U.S.A. still provides the most fertile ground for individual achievement and reward. Our laws and our incentive-driven market provide a framework that makes success possible. The ultimate reward of building your Mental Balance Sheet is accomplishing and living your vision/dream. America affords you that opportunity.

Explore Career Paths

There are unlimited career opportunities in technology, health, science, and business. Business is the backbone of America and the underlying economic structure which makes this country function. Look for jobs that fit your career path and will teach you the skills you need to handle leadership opportunities. Do not think that a Bachelor’s Degree automatically qualifies you for a big salary or a position of power. Expect to “pay your dues.” You can prove your worth and build your reputation by consistently performing above expectations.

Your career path may eventually lead to a high-level position, such as:

Entrepreneur - Someone who organizes, manages and assumes the risks of a new business.

Intrapreneur – Someone employed by a large organization who creates a new venture

Professional Manager – A person responsible for controlling or administering all or part of a company

Marketing and Sales Manager, Banking or Financial Manager, Medical professional, or Attorney. The list of possibilities is endless.

The U.S. Dept. of Labor, Employment and Training Administration (DOL) has developed a website at <https://www.careeronestop.org/> where you can

* explore career profiles,
* watch videos that describe jobs,
* discover the fastest-growing careers,
* find salary and wage information by career,
* assess your areas of interest and your skills to identify potential career paths,
* even explore a self-employment option.

The DOL website groups job opportunities into “career clusters.” It describes each cluster and provides job descriptions by the education level required.

* [Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources](https://www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/Learn/CareerClusters/agriculture-food-natural-resources-career-cluster.aspx) (Note – in the interactive version, bury links) <https://www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/Learn/CareerClusters/agriculture-food-natural-resources-career-cluster.aspx>
* [Architecture and Construction](https://www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/Learn/CareerClusters/architecture-construction-career-cluster.aspx)
* [Arts, Audio/Video Technology, and Communications](https://www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/Learn/CareerClusters/arts-audio-video-and-communications-career-cluster.aspx)
* [Business Management and Administration](https://www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/Learn/CareerClusters/business-management-and-administration-career-cluster.aspx)
* [Education and Training](https://www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/Learn/CareerClusters/education-and-training-career-cluster.aspx)
* [Energy](https://www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/Learn/CareerClusters/energy-career-cluster.aspx)
* [Finance](https://www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/Learn/CareerClusters/finance-career-cluster.aspx)
* [Government and Public Administration](https://www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/Learn/CareerClusters/government-and-public-administration-career-cluster.aspx)
* [Health Science](https://www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/Learn/CareerClusters/health-science-career-cluster.aspx)
* [Hospitality and Tourism](https://www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/Learn/CareerClusters/hospitality-and-tourism-career-cluster.aspx)
* [Human Services](https://www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/Learn/CareerClusters/human-services-career-cluster.aspx)
* [Information Technology](https://www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/Learn/CareerClusters/information-technology-career-cluster.aspx)
* [Law, Public Safety, and Corrections](https://www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/Learn/CareerClusters/law-public-safety-corrections-security-career-cluster.aspx)
* [Manufacturing](https://www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/Learn/CareerClusters/manufacturing-career-cluster.aspx)
* [Marketing](https://www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/Learn/CareerClusters/marketing-career-cluster.aspx)
* [Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math](https://www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/Learn/CareerClusters/science-technology-engineering-math-career-cluster.aspx)
* [Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics](https://www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/Learn/CareerClusters/transportation-distribution-and-logistics-career-cluster.aspx)

As you explore the information on this website, you will be providing your unconscious servomechanism with “food for thought.” You may even uncover a career path you haven’t considered.

Choosing a Path

Making decisions about college majors, occupations, or companies you want to work for requires effort. Deciding whether to work for yourself or join a corporation should be thoroughly researched and carefully considered.

To get a feeling for different types of work, go out of your comfort zone. Another way to learn about jobs is to work over the summer, work part-time, or do freelance “gig” work (<https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2016/article/what-is-the-gig-economy.htm> ). Experience will help direct you toward your goal in life.

Self-Reflection – Module 11

Complete the interest assessment at <https://www.careeronestop.org/toolkit/careers/interest-assessment.aspx>. What are the top three jobs suggested in your results?

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Think of an occupation you find interesting. Use this link to enter the name of the occupation and your zip code: <https://www.careeronestop.org/Toolkit/Careers/Occupations/occupation-profile.aspx>

Select a job from the generated list and use that information to fill in the blanks.

Job Title \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Outlook: New job opportunities are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the future.

Typical Wages: The **Median** annual wage plotted on the chart is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Typical Education: What is the most common education level for this job? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Projected Employment: By what percentage is employment in this occupation projected to increase or decrease? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

List the top five knowledge, skills, and ability required to succeed in this occupation.

Knowledge: Skills Abilities

1)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 1)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 1)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 4)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 4)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

5)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 5)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 5)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix A**

Mind Map Example

Goal: Get into a good college where you can graduate debt free

**Empiricism (Knowledge) –**

* You get the data – Know your ACT or SAT scores, GPA, and Class Rank.
* You work with a counselor or feed your data into an online calculator to determine schools where you are likely to be accepted.
* You go to <https://www.studentwallet.org/> and use the system to find the scholarships that apply to your situation.
* You go to <https://www.commonapp.org/> to understand the application requirements and the options for writing the required personal statement.

**Servomechanism (as a Creative Mechanism)**

* You consider these factors.
  + Your talents (What do you do best)
  + Your desires (What do you want to do after graduation?)
  + School locations (Will you stay in that area after graduation?)
  + Specific programs offered by each school
* You identify 5-8 schools to which you will apply, including at least one of the following:
  + a safety school – where you are nearly sure you will be accepted
  + a match school – where you believe your qualifications match their requirements
  + a stretch school – where you are close to requirements and hope to be accepted.

**Missile (Action)**

* You complete the information on the standard application.
* You write your personal statement and attach it to your standard application.
* You complete and submit any additional questions required by your selected colleges.
* You send your High School transcript and official ACT or SAT scores to each college.
* You get two letters of recommendation (teacher evaluations) and submit them to each school, as required.
* You pay each school’s application fee.
* You complete and submit the Free Applications for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA® form) at <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid>
* You apply for the scholarships and grants you identified.

**Servomechanism (as a Success Mechanism)**

* As responses to your applications for schools and scholarships arrive, you adjust your plans and identify the school that best fits and where your scholarships will cover the costs.

Reaching the goal of getting into a good college where you can graduate debt-free is the largest project you have taken on to date. Do not be discouraged – keep on track. Watch your deadlines and pay attention to details. Be courageous and adapt when necessary.

Personal Essay Worksheet

What are your best subjects in school? Are you interested in a career related to those subjects?

List some of the areas you might want to study in college: (e.g., business)

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

List any colleges or universities you are considering with programs that fit your interests:

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Traveling back and forth to college can be expensive. Is it essential to be within driving distance of family? Is there a location where you hope to live and work after college graduation? Please explain.

**Appendix B**

College Admissions - Writing Your Personal Statement

College applications require you to submit an original essay or Personal Statement. The essay aims to convey important information about yourself that is not revealed by questions on the college application. It is meant to show admissions counselors why they should be interested in you.

Writing a personal statement is as much a thinking task as a writing task. Before you write anything, you should spend ample time considering significant personality traits, life experiences, and activities that make you unique. Finding just the right subject for your essay is half of the battle. The exercises that follow will assist you in thinking through your options.

Writing that Engages Readers

Your essay's style must be appropriate for college admissions counselors rather than family or friends, yet it must be written in your own “voice.” A coach may work with you during the process, but your final words must be yours. To engage and intrigue readers, take advantage of the following guidelines.

Write in active voice (the sentence’s subject acts), not passive (e.g., The target of the action acts.)

For example:

Passive – The peanuts were eaten by the elephant.

Active – The elephant ate the peanuts.

“Show” (using descriptions and actions) rather than “tell” (summarizing or reporting facts to tell what is happening.) Let the reader experience your story.

For example:

Telling – I scored the final goal.

Showing – With only 20 seconds left on the clock, I sped down the side of the ice as my teammates checked attackers and dodged their bodies and sticks as they fell. At the last second, I shot the puck into the net and then slammed into the boards.

An excellent essay should:

* Appeal to the reader’s *heart*, *mind*, and *gut*.
* Have a) an *uncommon topic*, b) *uncommon connections*, and c) *uncommon language*. Of these, the one that can often differentiate your essay is *uncommon connections*.

Specific Applications

More than 1000 colleges use Common App as their standard admission application <https://www.commonapp.org/>.

The Coalition for College reports that 150+ “top colleges” use their application. <https://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org/> .

Common App vs. Coalition for College

Both provide prompts for their required essays. The Common Application list seven options, while the Coalition for College lists five – including the option to write an essay of your choice. Therefore, it is wise to choose one of the prompts from the Common Application and submit the same essay to the Coalition for College.

The Common Application specifies an essay length of between 250 and 650 words. The Coalition for College requires 500 – 550 words. Therefore, you can cover both requirements by writing an essay of 500 – 550 words.

Therefore, choosing an essay topic from prompts found on The Common Application is wise.

The content rarely changes, so consider those that were part of the 2022 application.

Common Application Essay Prompts 2022-2023

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story. *(If you choose this prompt, base your story on the personal attributes you intend to demonstrate.)*
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience? *(Be careful. College admissions readers may find your challenge to be sufficiently difficult/important. Be sure not to whine.)*
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome? *(The belief or idea does not have to be profound, but it should have changed your thinking or behavior from then on.)*
4. Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you? *(The crucial words here are surprising, affected, and motivated. The event must have affected your behavior or attitudes.)*
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others. *(This prompt assumes that personal growth and new understanding took place.)*
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more? *(You must clearly explain the captivation factor and the question about learning more.)*
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design. *(Do not fall for this one. Refrain from submitting creative writing since it probably does not reveal new information about you.)[[21]](#footnote-21)*

Reflecting on Themes

Before deciding on a specific prompt, consider the personal traits you want to reveal to the readers. Complete the following exercises.

1. List five words (qualities, characteristics) that best describe you:
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
7. List five words (qualities, characteristics) that your friends would use to describe you:
8. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
13. Choose three qualities from these lists that should be conveyed in your essay:
14. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
15. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
16. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
17. In one sentence, describe:
18. The mostmeaningful experience of my life was **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** because **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

1. The mostdifficult experience of my life was **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** because **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

1. The happiest experience of my life was **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** because **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

1. What is it that you want colleges to know about you? (Beyond grades, test scores, activities, or your travels?)

Now that you have jogged your memory use the following worksheet to brainstorm and brainstorm and record a few story ideas. Be sure to note which prompt you chose for this story.

Brainstorming

Idea #1

Prompt \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Story Idea\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

What do I want readers to know about me?

Idea #2

Prompt \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Story Idea\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

What do I want readers to know about me?

Idea #3

Prompt \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Story Idea\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

What do I want readers to know about me?

Idea #4

Prompt \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Story Idea\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

What do I want readers to know about me?

Final Topic

Choose the idea you thought best and complete this worksheet before you begin writing your first draft.

**My Prompt (Copy Prompt word for word)**

**My Theme**

**What happened?**

**Why does it matter? (What does it say about you? What will college admissions counselors find helpful? What does the story illustrate to the reader that they wouldn’t know from the rest of your application?)**

Glossary

Term Definition

**A**

accounts payable money that a company owes creditors but has not yet paid

accounts receivable money owed to a company by its debtors

accrue accumulate

acquisition one company (usually larger) takes over or buys another company.

active listening listening and responding to another person using all five senses

adaptive learning using new, learned knowledge to adapt plans and tactics

adversity difficulty, or unlucky situations or events

affirming encouraging, supporting

apprehension fear, or anxiety

asset an item of value that is owned by a business or individual

**B**

balance sheet a statement of the assets, liabilities, and capital at a particular point in time

benefits advantages, such as medical insurance, life insurance, and sick pay, provided to employees in addition to money

bias an unfair personal opinion that influences someone’s judgment

bribe to make someone do something by giving them money or presents

bond a security for money you lent to a government or a company that they will pay back at a particular interest rate

**C**

capacity the amount that can be produced

capital money used to start a business or to invest

chronic continuous or endlessly recurring and troublesome

common stock a security that represents some percentage of ownership in a company

compensation employee salary or wages

complacent unconcerned

compromise (a reputation) a change that makes something worse and that is not done for a good reason

confiscate take possession of something as a penalty

conscious memories or thoughts that you are aware of

continuous learning gaining new knowledge and learning new skills on an on-going basis

copyright an exclusive legal right to written or recorded material

creative mechanism the unconscious mind that sorts through stored knowledge and generates ideas and solutions

cultural institutions organizations whose mission is to preserve and promote culture, such as libraries, museums, theaters, etc.

**D**

deferred taxes income taxes that a company will pay in the future

delegating trust another person to take care of something

deviate stray from an established direction

diagnose identify a problem or illness

dividends money paid regularly to shareholders

**E**

empirical based on observation, experience and experimentation

empirical knowledge knowledge acquired by observation, experience and experimentation

endeavor work to achieve a goal

enhance improve

entrepreneur an individual who takes on the risks of creating a new business

equity the value of the shares issued by a company

ethical following a set of moral principles or standards

**F**

financier a person whose business is providing, investing, or lending money

formal education structured and systematic learning in school, from pre-school through university

freelance work work done by an independent individual, usually by contract

**G**

gig work temporary freelance work

goodwill the monetary value of the established reputation of a business

GPA Grade Point Average

groupthink the desire for harmony or conformity in the group results in an irrational or dysfunctional decision-making process

**H**

Hospitality Industry includes, lodging, restaurants, bars, event venues and planning, etc.

**I**

impede delay or prevent

implementation put into action

incentive-driven motivated to act by potential rewards

infrastructure basic physical and organizational structures and facilities

intangible asset a thing of value that is owned, but not physical, such as patents

intellectual capital knowledge acquired through structured learning, usually a school

intellectual property owned creative work, such as patents, manuscripts and designs

intrapreneur an employee who manages the development of new ideas or projects

intrinsic a basic part of something

invaluable priceless, indispensable

**K**

kickback an illegal payment made for preferential treatment in a transaction

**L**

liability something a person or company owes, or that increases risk

logistics coordinating and moving resources

**M**

market economy production and prices are determined by unrestricted competition

moral compass a person's standard of behavior or beliefs

morals a person's standard of behavior or beliefs

**N**

Note a loan

**P**

patent an exclusive right granted for an invention,

payable required to be paid

payroll the wages and salaries paid to a company's employees

peer someone at the same level or age

pending waiting to be settled

perfectionism belief that anything short of perfection is unacceptable

positive reinforcement rewarding a behavior

procrastination delaying or postponing an action

property rights the ability to legally purchase and accumulate private property

psycho-cybernetics a theory of how you can use your mind to steer yourself toward success

**Q**

quadrillion 1,000 trillions

**R**

Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) a company that owns or finances income-producing real estate

reflection serious thought

relevant significantly important in relationship to something that is happening or being considered

reluctance unwillingness

representative government a political system where citizens elect people to represent them and make laws

retail sells products directly to the end consumer.

retained earnings profits after paying taxes and any dividends

**S**

security a tradeable financial asset, such a stock, bond, or option.

Security and Exchange Commission (S.E.C.) government agency which oversees stock exchanges, stock brokers and dealers, investment advisors, and mutual funds

self-image how one perceives their own abilities, appearance and personality traits

servomechanism automatic device that uses sensor feedback to correct the action of a mechanism

stock a security that represents ownership of a portion of a company

success mechanism the unconscous mind that focuses on a goal and steers you toward it

**T**

tactic a specific action taken toward reaching a goal

trademark any word, phrase, symbol, design, or a combination of these things that identifies a company's goods or services

trajectory the curved path that an object follows after it has been thrown or shot into the air

**U**

unconscious the part of the mind that one is not aware of, but that affects ones behavior and emotions

universal education free and open access to education for all children from kindergarten through high school

U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) government agency that assists in establishing and growing small businesses

**W**

wealth sum of your valuable possessions

wholesale sell products in large quantities to other companies (e.g., retail stores).

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