

YOU CAN DO IT!

BE A BETTER SELF

This is the third article in the series - You can do it - written by Gunilla Miranda. This time we talk a bit about self development.

How many words have already been written about this subject? Many people nearly yawn when I write it – again. Haven't we all heard it before? Maybe so, but there are so many different angles to this topic that I don't think you can ever be bored.

Samuel Smiles, 1812-1904, probably published the first self-help-book in 1859. Its opening sentence: "Heaven helps those who help themselves", sums it up very well.

In 1902 James Allen's book "As a Man Thinketh", proceeds from the conviction that "a man is literally what he thinks, his character being the complete sum of all his thoughts." Noble thoughts create a noble person, whilst lowly thoughts shape a miserable person. One can easily object to that black-and-white- portrait, but never the less there is a lot in his book that still has bearing today.

Some people may mention Dale Carnegie, 1888-1955, as the creator of the self-help movement in the 20th century. Having failed in several careers, Carnegie became fascinated with reasons behind success and its link to self confidence. He studied the subject for many years and in 1936 he wrote the book "How to win friends and influence people", which has now sold over 15 million copies.

Self development what is that really? Developing ourselves? From where to what and for what reason? I define self development as a refinement which is taking place on the inside and that eventually will radiate on the outside.

One of your first thoughts might be: "Self development is only for others. I don't have any money to buy books nor to attend expensive courses". That's fine, I accept that, but don't use it as an excuse not to do anything. For myself, I have developed the most when I've had the least money – none at all. How? By eating humble pie, not only eating it but chewing it for a long time! When in the past I had a lot of money and could attend any self-development course, for instances Deepak Chopra or Wayne Dyer, I didn't develop at all. It wasn't their fault I simply didn't take in what they had to offer.

This suggests that to develop you need to be willing to. This may sound pretty basic. It's not. It's from here it all starts. To be willing to change. To be willing to improve. What's the next requirement? Motivation. It helps to have a reason, but it is still possible without it. Some times survival is your only motivation even though you don't reflect upon it at the time.

What comes after that? Well, you need to decide what kind of person you want to be? What characteristics do you want to own? The further away you are now from that kind of person, the harder you need to work with yourself. This indicates that you need to know who you are today and where you want to be tomorrow.

It might be a cliché that you can be anything you want. To some extent it is simply not true. Even though I so badly want to be Celine Dion or Marion Jones or a new Georgia O'Keeffe, I have to accept that I can't. That I don't have their talents. However, you can decide to be within what Mahatma Ghandi was showing on the outside, meaning in peace and harmony with yourself and the world. Or you can decide to simply stop making excuses for not being the person you want to be and instead making room for the person you truly can be.



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