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13 Fast and Effective Self-Development Exercises

Whether at home or at work, most of us strive to never stop acquiring knowledge and learning new skills. This drive for continuous self-improvement can have a major positive impact, oftentimes leading to better opportunities for career and personal growth.

To make the most of the personal-development process, you should focus on implementing effective strategies that generate fast results. To help, we asked members of the Young Entrepreneur Council to recommend their favorite self-development

exercises. Here are their ideas:

1. Do 1% extra every day.

Progress requires consistency. To get better at anything, you need to start with little improvements. That's why I like to choose my goal and push myself 1% extra every single day. The easiest example is push ups. If your goal is 40 push ups, start with five and add one every day. It works because 1% is such a small effort, you won't even notice how you become significantly better.

-Solomon Timothy, OneIMS

2. Monitor your self-talk.

There are so many things we can do to make changes for the better, but none of them will last long or be as effective if you don't address negative self-talk first. Even just a little negative self-talk can spiral into stress and depression. How do you respond to successes and failures? Positive and negative feedback loops form based on your responses. Celebrate wins, but also forgive losses.

-Blair Thomas, eMerchantBroker

3. Learn to say "no."

It can be tempting to want to help everyone out and give your all to every area of your life. However, in the long run, it isn't always helping you to move forward and grow. When you realize that by actually saying "no" you might be helping others, including yourself, it becomes easier to focus on what is truly important.

-Matthew Podolsky, Florida Law Advisers, P.A.

4. Check in with yourself.

I use these two self-accountability questions for regular check-ins with myself: What am I tolerating? and What am I avoiding? I ask myself things like, What am I tolerating from myself? From my team? From my clients, relationships, etc.? and What am I avoiding doing? What am I dreading? What am I afraid of? These questions give me an action item list to tackle.

-Rachel Beider, PRESS Modern Massage

5. Identify "trigger moments."

Get excited about getting upset. Use every "trigger moment" to your advantage. You do this by staying aware of when you get emotionally charged over anything. When you identify a charge, stop what you're doing, trace your feelings and then disarm it. Now you're ready to confront whatever challenge you are facing free of the patterns that can stifle your creative problem-solving.

-Hajmil Carr, Trueline

6. Listen to audio-books and podcasts.

A self-development exercise that brings fast results for me is listening to audio-books or podcasts on my commute to work. It's a great way to make use of time that otherwise would be lost in traffic. In the car or not, it's helpful to read about your industry, your potential customers or your profession as a whole; you can get very valuable insights and apply them right to your business or your career and your life.

-Alfredo Atanacio, Uassist.ME

7. Read a book every day for 20 minutes.

People spend hours using their phones and surfing social networks every day. We can all-and I, personally do-take 20 minutes out of the day to read a book, too. Forming and starting small habits that are not so ambitious at the beginning is a very important and powerful way to change our main habits and routines. Start small and scale.

-Kevin Leyes, Team Leyes

8. Write things down.

I've always enjoyed writing down a to-do list or goals or just journaling in general. Writing things down drills your goals into your nervous system and makes you much more likely to accomplish them. Taking time to reflect is a great way to accelerate your personal development, too, as long as you're consistent and thoughtful in your approach.
-Amine Rahal, Little Dragon Media

9. Talk to your loved ones.

I like to have an open, honest discussion with those around me about what I can do better as a friend, colleague, peer, etc. Having an open discussion is a great way to have a judgment-free talk about how you can improve yourself.
-Jared Atchison, WPForms

10. Ask for feedback.

I find asking for feedback from colleagues and peers to be a great form of self-development. Outside feedback helps us cut through our own tunnel vision and find areas of improvement.
-Kristin Kimberly Marquet, Marquet Media, LLC

11. Schedule daily creative time.

Every day, aim to spend 15-30 minutes doing something creative. It could be writing, singing, painting, cooking-any kind of creative outlet. The fast result is that you will feel more connected, focused and happy. The slightly-less fast result is that you will start generating some new and fresh ideas for your business. The long-term result is that you become an expert in a new discipline!
-Reuben Yonatan, GetVoIP

12. Meditate for five minutes.

Yes, it takes time to become an experienced mediator, but simply taking five minutes for oneself brings fast results. Even if you don't feel like you know what you are doing, download an app, put your headphones on, move to a quiet place and take a break. Don't try to "clear your mind," but rather become aware of how you are feeling. Think of it as a self-check-in rather than silencing your mind.
-Matt Wilson, Under30Experiences

13. Spend 15-30 minutes on self-reflection.

Every day I take 15-30 minutes to sit in silence and reflect on my choices throughout the day. I'll write down big accomplishments and setbacks, and look for ways to strengthen the positive while reducing the negative. I've found that this tactic helps me make small, manageable changes to my personal and professional life.
-Chris Christoff, MonsterInsights

*Source: Success.com, Young Entrepreneur Council (YEC)

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Regional Sales Manager- Northern California- Enterprise Access Control

Applications/Pre-Sales Coordinator- Enterprise Solutions

Regional Sales Manager- Texas Region- Enterprise Access Control & Video Solutions

Sales Engineer - Federal Accounts - Video Surveillance

Regional Sales Manager- Southeastern US- Enterprise Access Control- **COMPLETED**

Sales Director- IoT Solutions- AI/Operational Intelligence

Regional Sales Manager- Enterprise Access Control Software- Mid-Atlantic Region- **COMPLETED**

Regional Sales Manager- Critical Incident Management Software- Southeastern US

Applications Engineer/Proposal Development- Enterprise Access Control

National Sales Manager- HVAC/Connected Solutions - **COMPLETED**

Field Applications Engineer/Trainer- Access Control- Pacific Northwest- **COMPLETED**

Regional Sales Manager- Access Control- South Central Region/Texas

Major Projects/System Integration Sales- Connecticut

Manager of Sales Engineering: Access and Identity Management Software- VA/DC-**COMPLETED**

Product Manager/Business Development- HVAC/Life Safety

Federal Accounts Sales Director- Enterprise Access Control- **COMPLETED**

Senior Product Manager- Video Surveillance

Manager of Sales Engineering: Video/VMS- **COMPLETED**

VP Channel Sales- Enterprise Solutions - **COMPLETED**

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