



## How to Get Your Own Way

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Are you an Action Man (or an Action Person, I suppose, to be politically correct!)? Because most of us are Reaction Men – and Reaction Women!! The normal mind is a highly-tuned, highly effective reactive mechanism. Evolutionary psychology proposes that we automatically react and behave to ordinary everyday events because we need to retain our key faculty of attention for the lion jumping out of the bushes to eat us! As if that was going to happen today!

The big problem with the manner in which our lives are driven by reactive behaviour is that, more often and not, that behaviour sets off an ongoing chain of events (a chain reaction if you will) that takes us further away from the kind of effortless happiness and success for which we all long. In other words, rather than getting your own way in life, you lose your way. Here's how to ensure that you get what you want out of life, on your terms – because there is a wrong way to go about it (the normal way) and then, there's The Way.

The Way (to get what you want out of life – in all its various facets, work, rest, play and pleasure) does not involve any form of habitual behaviour that saps your energy or distracts you from the important things you should be doing. Let's take a simple example. There is no merit whatsoever in reading the inside pages of most daily newspapers that cover all the sordid details of domestic violence, sexual violence, robbery (the list is quite a long one) – because you're simply wasting your time and energy when it could be far better spent.

The Way does not involve reactive behaviour at all. Generally speaking, when we react to something we make an already bad situation worse. Another couple of simple examples. Who amongst us has teenage children that, when screamed at (a reactive process), behave better? How many people spend their working lives "fire-fighting" when their energies would be better directed to preventing the fire in the first place? Indeed, how many people waste their time trying to put out fires that generally fizzle out on their own?

The Way does not involve entertaining or being entertained by useless thoughts. These thoughts come in all shapes and sizes – from wishing you were on the golf course (when you're in a client meeting) to worry, frustration, self-doubt and anxiety.

The Way does involve: Meditation, A Clear and Focused Mind and Right Action. Each follows the other.

Meditation, like useless thought, comes in all shapes and sizes – from guided meditation to TM, from primordial sound meditation to unguided Vipassana. Indeed, I would contend that running or working out are forms of meditation if the mind is totally focused on the physical exercise involved. In fact, I believe that one of the most effective (but also difficult) forms of meditation is to simply sit and do nothing. The point is that “meditation” covers a multitude of all good things for the mind. Whatever form of meditation one cares to pursue, it calms the mind, diffuses the effects of useless thought and, most importantly, disciplines the mind for the rough and tumble of what follows – the normal everyday life.

Meditation’s discipline enables the practitioner develop a clarity and presence of mind that are simply not otherwise possible. This clarity and presence enables us to stop reacting and start acting – start, for perhaps the first time in our lives, to take real action, right action. With a clear and present mind, one immediately appreciates the difference between a constructive or creative thought, on the one hand, and the ravings of the normal mind, on the other. That same clarity and presence of mind enables us distinguish between time and energy wasters (both tasks and people) and those things to which we must devote our energies to be effective and efficient at what we are doing – at any particular moment in time.

Indeed, that’s what presence is – being fully (or more fully than the normal person who, research tells us, is only 1% present) present in the here and now, fully involved, fully engrossed in the task in hand – whatever the task in hand might be. This presence in the here and now doesn’t just enable us spot the important from the urgent or the vital from the superfluous – it enables us do the important and vital to the very best of our ability. That is what right action is – and there’s a world of difference between right action and reaction.

But even more than that, clarity, presence and right action lead us to a place where our abnormally high input of energy elicits a response from those around us (people positively respond to people with presence) and from the universe at large (quantum physics proves that this is very far removed from wishful thinking or fanciful hocus-pocus!) In other words, our clarity, presence and right action lead us in the direction of all the things, events and people we need to bring us towards the goals that our hearts desire. Now, that’s The Way!