

# **MASTERY OVER SELF**

ACHIEVING SUCCESS BY  
MASTERY OF ONESELF!



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# Introduction

*We speak a lot about self-worth without using it actually. Rarely do we make a true assessment of ourselves and think about ourselves as we truly are. If we were to become more pragmatic about ourselves, our lives would definitely become much more profitable and productive.*

*Self-belief and understanding of self-worth is the primary step toward gaining mastery in anything. Mastery doesn't come without being confident about yourself first.*

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# **Chapter 1:**

You Are You – Being Realistic about Yourself

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# Summary

*The first step to believing in yourself is to understand who you really are.*

## **You Are You – Being Realistic about Yourself**

One of the most important things you need to do to achieve any kind of success is to be very realistic about yourself. You need to understand who you really are. Now, if you cannot even run for three minutes, you cannot start believing that you can win a gold medal in running, can you? Probably you can if you practice, but certainly not with what you are at present. This is what is extremely important to you when you begin. You have to understand your strengths and your capabilities. Realizing that is a very important step of believing in yourself.

There are people all around you achieving something or the other. Some are experts at playing the guitar, some are very brilliant with accounting, and some are great at housekeeping and so on. When we see such people, we do get impressed and we do say something, "I wish I was like him or her." This is common human tendency. But that does not help us when we are trying to foster our belief in ourselves. If we are to do that properly, the most important thing we need is to know what we are really capable of.

Take a moment to think. Think what your strengths are. Think what you can do. We are not talking about things that you are an expert in, even some amount of knowledge in that particular area will do. Then take a blank sheet of paper and write down these things. Then arrange them in order. The first three things should be the things that you really do well, followed by things that you can do fairly well, followed by things that you can barely do but you can learn and improve. Take

a look at this sheet of paper. Keep it with you always. This is what you are capable of. It is a part of what you are.

This realization is extremely valuable to you when you are trying to make a self-assessment. You need to know what you can do and what you can improve upon. If you are trying to become a master at something, it is very important to be sure of yourself and not live under illusions.

Remember that you shouldn't take what people say at face value. Someone may tell you that you paint well, but that person may be prejudiced. You have to value yourself. Probably entering into a competition will tell you where you stand. At the same time, don't shoot yourself down too much either. If you are good at something, you are good at it. Don't get overworked that you aren't as good as the legends. You can always improve.

The most important thing is to value yourself. When you know your limitations and your potentials, you know you can stand much better on your own.



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## **Chapter 2:**

Goals – How They Help Your Self-Belief

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# Summary

*Set goals. This helps you in chalking out a path that you will travel on in your life. If you believe in yourself, you will also achieve these goals and move on from one point to the other.*

## **Goals – How They Help Your Self-Belief**

Goals are a very important aspect of our life. We are rationally thinking creatures; we don't live by instinct. That is the reason we need goals that can help us take from one point to another in our lives. When we are at school, our goals could be to achieve a particular grade; when we are in college, our goal might be to score a particular mark to get admission in a certain professional course; when we are able to work, our goal could be to get into a particular organization and so on. We are always setting goals for ourselves, and trying to reach them.

If you aren't establishing goals already, you are leading an unplanned life. Your life lacks direction. You aren't living; you are merely existing. You are merely taking life as it comes.

However, a person who has goals in life has one very important benefit. They come to know what they are really worth. If you have set a particular goal for yourself and you achieve it, you know you are capable of that. This makes you surer about yourself. You know now that this was something you could do and you did. This is not just something on your résumé; it is something that is etched into your life – it has become a part of yourself. And it will reinforce the belief you have in yourself.

Consider this. You set a goal to earn a hundred thousand in the first three months of your business. When you are setting the goal, you are only shooting in the dark, whatever the factors that influence your goal-setting might be. But then you really strike this achievement.

Now, you know that wasn't shooting in the dark. You know you are capable of such a thing. It has made you believe in yourself and you can go and plan bigger things.

This is what goals do. They concretize something that's just a hazy picture, a vague idea. Goal achievement makes you realize your strengths and helps your belief in an enormous way.

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# **Chapter 3:**

Appreciate Your Successes

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# Summary

*Don't just move on from one point to another like a frog does. Take time to smell the roses at each point.*

## **Appreciate Your Successes**

When you are moving on your path of progress, you will have hits as well as misses. There will be things you will do better than you expected and there will be things that you will flounder at. Now, it is very important that you understand what you achieve. It is very important that you realize where you have succeeded and you appreciate it because this is what will propel you forward.

When you achieve something, however trivial it might be, make sure to take some time out and celebrate it. It does not need to be a huge celebration, but you must do something to underline the fact that you achieved something. You might just want to hang out with your friends and party or maybe take a break and go on a holiday that has been long overdue. But, celebrating is a must.

Why is that so important? For one, when you are celebrating something, you are creating a memory. You will remember the success better because you partied after that. You will etch it into your subconscious and conscious mind. And when you remember your success in a better way, you will remember that you were capable of achieving that. This success gets written in indelible ink in your list of accomplishments – it adds to your self-belief.

But if you don't party and let the achievement pass you by without a whimper, you are likely to forget about it soon. It won't amount to much either because there's no happy association that you have created for it.

It is highly important to involve people in your celebrations. People around us reinforce our feelings. If you party with friends or family, these people understand the magnitude of your accomplishment too. Chances are that their zest and zeal for celebrating your success will rub off on you and make it linger. There will also be a lot of talk about your achievement and many of these things will remain with you forever.

If you are making a practical belief about yourself, that belief should not exaggerate your weaknesses nor should it downplay your achievements. For that reason, it becomes very important for you to be happy and make others happy with your achievements.



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## **Chapter 4:**

It Is Better to Have Tried than Not at All

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# Summary

*Trying puts things into better perspective. Not trying doesn't help in giving you a true picture of yourself.*

## **It Is Better to Have Tried than Not at All**

Apprehensions can take a severe toll on our life, and the worst part is that we are an inherently apprehensive species. Even if it is about buying something at the mall, we think a dozen times whether it will be a good buy or not. We do the same kind of thinking in everything that we do. Even when we have to try something new, we become apprehensive. In most cases, we let our apprehensions rule us and then we don't try that particular thing at all.

A lot of people lose out on life because they do not try. They don't try because of various prejudices and complexes. They might feel that they are not up to doing something, but this could be a view of others and not of themselves. But if you have the right belief in yourself, you will know what you are capable of, and you will not flinch from trying things.

Think of a person who knows that he can do well in a particular racing competition. He hasn't raced before, and so there will be several people to say that he is wasting his time. Most of us, if we were in his place, would take such criticism and think that we really cannot achieve that, and we don't even make the attempt.

But suppose this person has belief in himself. He knows that he is capable of doing it, even though he hasn't showed the world so far that he can do that particular thing. So he surges on. He puts in a great deal of practice. *He is motivated by himself, and that's the best motivation you could have.* Whether he wins or loses is another matter entirely. What is important is that he tried.

The crux of all this is, don't take other people's criticisms blindly. They don't know you. They don't understand what you feel. You are the only person who knows you. Your father doesn't, your mother doesn't, your teacher doesn't, your girlfriend or boyfriend doesn't, your spouse doesn't, your employer doesn't. It is only you who has your self-worth and within the realms of this, you can make your decisions and possibly even succeed.

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# **Chapter 5:**

Constantly Improving Your Idea of Self

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# Summary

*You change. You aren't what you were ten years ago. Hence, your idea of self must also change.*

## **Constantly Improving Your Idea of Self**

Just as nothing in the world remains the same, your belief in yourself shouldn't remain the same either. It has to keep evolving.

You don't remain static at any phase in life. You keep learning new things, gaining more experiences, broadening your perspectives of life, meeting new people and so on. Your capabilities are constantly increasing. It is not just about the academic and professional qualifications that you gain. It is about everything in life that you do. Whatever you do, you are adding it to your repertoire of capabilities. You are reaching new pinnacles of success and even if you are failing in things, you are stretching your own limits each time.

That is why you need to always keep evolving your belief in yourself. If you were able to do a particular thing a few years back, there are all chances that you can do that same thing better today. If when you started with your job, you could meet a deadline with a piece of work within three days, probably with all the efficiency you have gained by now, you can do the job within one day. You have to realize that your capabilities are constantly changing and so should your belief in yourself about achieving things.

Take the example of a guitar player. When he must have started, he must have used a very elementary four string guitar. At that stage, he might not have thought he could master even that. But just about a month of diligent practice later, he could be ready for a five string or even a six string guitar. Maybe when he looks back now, he will even

laugh at himself at how he used to think that a four string could be so difficult.

We are like that. Our belief in ourselves is subject to time and our own experience. As our life progresses, we learn new things and hence our belief in ourselves should become stronger as well.

Having a practical view of yourself is very important. But it is also very important to know that you are becoming better all the time. So, let your practical view of yourself be dynamic.



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# **Chapter 6:**

Moving toward Mastery

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# Summary

*Mastery comes through confidence. Confidence comes through believing in yourself. It is a natural progression.*

## **Moving toward Mastery**

Give it a thought – what is the next step after you are completely sure what you are capable of achieving, i.e. after you are totally practical about your self-worth?

When you begin believing in yourself completely, you become more confident. You don't mind the detractors and the obstacles. You begin telling yourself, "I know I can achieve that, let them tell anything they want." You are your own best friend and motivator. This is what confidence really is.

But it doesn't stop there. Your confidence plows you on to actually achieve the things that you believe in. Consider this. You believe that you can lose 10 pounds in a month. You believe so staunchly in this that you become very confident that you can do it. Your confidence now becomes your willpower and you pull all stops in achieving your goal. Because you believed so intensely in it, you will actually be able to achieve it. You will actually knock off those 10 pounds. See what happens? Your belief made you confident and hence you achieved.

This is true in every aspect of your life. Like in the example we took earlier – playing the guitar. It works there as well. You believed you could play it, you became confident and you are now able to play *Hotel California* wonderfully. Now what? Now you try other things. You try other songs. You believe you can do it. With each new song that you learn, your belief in yourself is reinforced. You try more difficult songs. You try Guns n' Roses. You try Aerosmith. You keep on progressing

and pushing your own boundaries because your belief in yourself is on an expansion spree.

And then one day it happens. Somewhere along the line, you begin making your own music. You may probably even do well. You make people surprised when you riff so well. These were the same people who criticized you earlier, but you knew what you could do. They now stare in awe at you. They call you a master at what you do.

It happens with everyone who achieves success. They chase their belief with supreme confidence and they get what they want. They shun their debilities and criticism. One day, when you really become a master, these people will be eating humble pie. They will carry on criticizing someone else, but you are the one who will have achieved what you believed in.

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# **Chapter 7:**

The 4 Vital Ingredients for Achieving Mastery

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# Summary

*Gaining mastery is actually a sequential process. Here are the five things you will need to pack for the journey.*

# **The 4 Vital Ingredients for Achieving Mastery**

## ***Believing in Yourself***

Without this primary ingredient, you aren't going to be able to become a master at anything. To become an expert, it is absolutely vital that you know you can achieve it. Belief must be within practical realms but it is something made with knowledge. It is your own self-assessment.

## ***Confidence***

Believing in yourself is one thing, gaining confidence is another. *Realizing* that you can bake a pie well is belief. But *knowing* that your pie will really turn out well is confidence. Having belief in yourself doesn't take you much far. This is like water that is stored at a height, purposeless and meaningless. But if you were to have confidence, it could make that water fall. And then you could use it to do various things. This is what your confidence does to things that you really have a belief that you can do.

## ***Practice***

Confidence mustn't be empty. It has to be reinforced all the time with practice. You cannot be confident about baking a pie if you haven't practiced it earlier. You cannot be confident about speaking in front of a 1,000 people if you haven't tried it out earlier. There are many subtle places where you might go wrong. Hence, it is very important that you keep practicing things. Only when you practice something so

well that you can even do it backward are you really moving toward being a master at it.

### ***Shunning Criticism***

You will meet a lot of it on the way. Only a very little of the criticism will be anywhere near positive. A lot of the rest will be out of envy or fear. You have to see through this and move ahead. This is where believing in yourself becomes important. If you know fully well that you can do something, you can fend off the criticism that comes your way in a much better manner.



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# **Chapter 8:**

Mobilizing Your Strengths; Improving Your Weaknesses

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# Summary

*You have strengths as well as weaknesses. Here's how you should deal with both of them if you are moving toward mastery.*

## **Mobilizing Your Strengths; Improving Your Weaknesses**

We are an amalgamation of the good and the bad. None of us is completely good or completely bad. We have our grey areas. So, when do we reach mastery in something? It is when we convert more of our weaknesses into strengths that we are able to do that. But, is it all that simple?

You cannot convert your weaknesses into strengths so simply. But being realistic about them helps. If you know that you always commit a mistake about a certain thing, and accept that, you can work on it. You have to realize that there is a limitation. If you are too blind to see this limitation, you won't be able to do much about it. You won't be able to remove your weakness in one day. It could take a considerable amount of time, but being realistic and accepting about them helps you in two ways:-

- It helps you to be cautious in that particular area and probably avoid it or replace it with another option that you are better at.
- It creates in you a sense of your drawback so that you can work at improving it and trying to reduce its impact on your overall performance.

Weakness can be improved. It only takes the right confidence and practice to be able to do that.

But one more thing that can help you in moving toward perfection is understanding your strengths. You shouldn't be too negativistic about

yourself. If you have some great strengths, try bringing them to the fore. All great performers, great sportspeople, great businesspeople have had their weaknesses. But most of them have camouflaged that by focusing on their strengths.

Your strengths are more special to you than your weaknesses. This is because your weaknesses are other people's weaknesses as well, but your strengths are your own. Other people aren't strong there. Only you are. And probably a handful of other people are. If you can mobilize these strengths and keep bettering them, you could be a much better performer at what you do. This is an important lesson of life; learn it well.

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# **Chapter 9:**

Avoiding Stress and Keeping Focus

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# Summary

*Stress comes majorly in the way of achieving mastery. Its management is one of the vital things that you need to do in order to succeed.*

## **Avoiding Stress and Keeping Focus**

Stress will come your way often. When you strongly believe in something, but don't see it happening as yet, stress begins to take its toll on you. You begin to think, "Why am I not able to do this? I know I am so good at it!" You probably become frustrated because you cannot achieve something that you are sure you are so good at, and the frustration turns into stress.

You will be able to keep better focus on your goals if you can involve yourself in some stress management exercises. These can help you by clearing your mind and keeping it fixated on your goal. The following are some things that you need to keep in mind.

- It is not that you will achieve whatever you believe in within just a day. Many people have tried their whole lives to achieve something, despite the fact that they have believed with their heart and soul that they can do something. You have to give things time too. The sooner you begin, and the stauncher you believe in it, the faster will you be able to reach the goals you have set for yourself.
- Wanting to achieve something means that you have to be relentless about it, but there is no need to be unstoppable. You have to think about other things in life as well, such as your friends and family. When the chips are down, these are the people who will really be by your side. In fact, your family and friends are a whole stress management program in themselves.
- Take breaks often. Go on trips. Treat yourself to small luxuries that make you happy. It is only when you are intrinsically happy

can you strive toward achievement because that keeps you free from stress.

→ Use some therapies that can keep you focused. Meditation methods such as Yoga are highly effective. It is quite beneficial for you to become acquainted with this life-improving technique and the sooner you begin, the better will it be. Breathing exercises are good as well. Learn them and use them. You will find that you can keep frustrations at bay by using all these methods.



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## **Chapter 10:**

Awareness of Self is Attaining of Mastery

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# Summary

*You become a master only when you know yourself fully well. You have to become the master of self first and foremost.*

## **Awareness of Self is Attaining of Mastery**

Your awareness of yourself is the most important ingredient – even the first ingredient – in the achievement of mastery. If you want to excel at something, you have to understand that you will be able to do it. This realization cannot be put in you by someone else. You have to find this out yourself.

When children begin school, they have a lot of subjects to learn. They have English and Math and Science and Craft. They learn various things for a few years, till they are able to understand things better. Then, when they are adolescents, they begin questioning themselves, “What is it I really want to do?” and “What is it I really can do?” This is the first step toward realization of self. The adolescents are making a self-investigation into what they are able to do.

Then they choose what they want and enter into that stream in college. But even there, they find there will be specialization courses. Again they have to ask what they have to do – Physical Chemistry or Organic Chemistry, Sociology or Human Studies, Accountancy or Economics and so on. The self-investigation continues. As these individuals begin understanding themselves better and better, they move toward finer modes of specialization.

This is what we have to continue throughout our lives. We have to always be sure of what we *want to* do and what we *can* do and make our decisions that way. Mastery lies in understanding our capabilities and using them to the hilt. A person who constantly does that will

always be taking strides in the direction of becoming more and more proficient at that thing.

But, of course, practice is important. We can never undermine its importance. You have to realize that. You have to also realize that you have to learn from your experiences. However, it all starts with one common thing – believing in yourself in the most realistic manner.

## **Conclusion**

*You can now understand yourself better. Before reading this eBook, you probably only had a distorted and ambiguous view of yourself, but now you know how you can get to understanding yourself better.*

*To believing in yourself better.*

*That's the first step toward mastery.*

***All the best to you!!!***





