

## Your Achievement Regulator



The Secret Of The Slight Edge  
By Bob Moawad/TJ Hoisington

What happens to the star of the high school football team when he graduates and fails to carry “stardom” into adulthood? Sad to say, but in many instances the young man may have mistakenly believed he would always be admired as an all-star football player. Suppose no colleges recruited him, and he hadn’t prepared himself academically? What happens now to his “big-man-on-campus” picture of himself? Suddenly, his father isn’t bragging about his touchdowns anymore, and his mother comments about the weight he’s packing on since he’s not out on the field. How does he feel about himself now? A plump, unimportant, go no-where, has-been? Not exactly a winning picture, is it? How did he get there?

When he saw himself as a football star, he acted in alignment with that belief. He walked proud and tall, knowing that he was a big part of his team’s success. He was comfortable around his teammates, teachers, parents, siblings, and friends. They supported his belief system; he looked to them to reaffirm the picture of his own successful image. Now he’s miles away from home. He’s struggling with his classes. He’s wandering around a campus with no familiar faces. Nobody cares about who or what he was in high school; to them he’s just another freshman.

He could accept this new “truth” and align his image accordingly. He might see himself now as a nobody! No more looking at the coeds and giving them that confident smile. Instead, he avoids eye contact and goes back to the dorm after his classes to slump across his bed and wonder what the heck happened! Like many of us, he may have made the mistake of attaching his self-worth to what he did instead of who he was. Thus, when he did change, so did his feeling of self-worth.

The truth is that you want to separate yourself from your performance. If you make a mistake, that doesn’t mean you are a mistake. If you failed at something, that doesn’t mean you are a failure. It only means that in that situation you under-performed, which in no way diminishes your individual worth. This is at the core of self-esteem. Like any other principle in this book, it is simply governed by your quality of your thinking.

In this illustration, we talk a little bit about self-esteem as we begin to introduce the additional component affecting your performance, that is, the self-image, the “head” of the matter.

In terms of your self-image, if you are thrown into a situation without knowing how to change your self-image, your discomfort in the new position or status may cause you to seek the comfort of your old image and comfort zone. You see it every day! Just as you attracted into existence that which harmonizes with your thoughts, so do you push away those things that are NOT in harmony with your dominate reality.

I spoke earlier about people who feared change and used the “I-am-what-I-am” belief system. They were perfectly correct. You won’t be somebody you’re not! You are constantly finding ways, positive or negative, to make sure you act like YOU! If you believe the “real” you is a successful businessperson, destined for high achievement with an infinite capacity to create positive things in your life, you will, in all likelihood, fulfill your prophecy. Even if you’re not there yet, keep imagining your new self in vivid, clear detail. How will you feel when you’re there? What will you look like? Who will be there with you? What will you have? Imagine the sensory and emotional impact of that completed picture. Repeat the experience over and over and over. Therein lies the key: knowing how to change your dominant beliefs.

Your self-image is always “accurate” because it simply aligns itself with your current beliefs. It isn’t your self-image that has gone haywire! It’s your belief system stored in your mind. Your actions and decisions are only as accurate as the information upon which they are based. You may mistakenly believe your willpower will carry you through to achieving a goal, but the challenge is this: Willpower consistently comes in second to your dominant belief and your current self-image! Why? Let’s look at the way you think.

You are constantly taking in data through your many senses. Your association and evaluations are based on previously stored data (experiences, beliefs, and attitudes), on which you may or may not take action. All of your beliefs are stored in the mind at the subconscious level, without bias or judgment. The mind then resolves all conflicts, reduces tension and creatively solves problems. It also provides drive and energy to maintain your “reality” and the image you have of yourself, which is consistent with your current dominant beliefs.

You may be familiar with the term “comfort zone” and most likely can feel when you are inside or outside your comfort zone. Your comfort zone monitors your range of performance and where you feel comfortable. It corresponds with your current self-image and largely determines your achievement and performance levels. Since you are a comfort-seeking organism, it is perfectly natural to experience “anxiety” and “tension” when you’re outside the “zone.”

If I were to ask you to walk across a narrow plank that was 20 feet long and only four inches off the ground, and I offered you \$20 – you would probably do it without a second thought. On the other hand, what if I asked you to walk over the same narrow plank, but this time I raised it to the top of two skyscrapers? Not too high, only 300 feet above ground. There is no wind. The plank is not going to bend. And again, I’ll give you \$20. How would you feel now? Most people would feel anxiety, stress, or fear. But what really has changed? It’s the same plank you walked over successfully when it was four inches above the ground. What changed was that you imagined and what you said to yourself (self-talk) as you imagined it. In fact, you might have felt traces of fear simply by imagining the scenario. Remember, *words* (self-talk) trigger *pictures*, which then triggers *emotion*.

Four inches was within your comfort zone, and depending on the range of your comfort zone, the comfortable height could vary. For one person, four inches is the limit before experiencing anxiety; for another person, the comfort zone could range anywhere between four inches all the way up to five feet. But anything above five feet clearly would have been outside that person's comfort zone, hence uncomfortable. This reflects the boundaries of your comfort zone. It's the same as a person who feels quite comfortable speaking to friends in small group settings, but feels very uncomfortable speaking to large groups.

When you are outside your comfort zone, you may find yourself creatively recreating the conditions that surrounded your old comfort zone and getting "back where you belong!" You find yourself taking two steps forward, only to take three steps back. Now, you don't have to go "back to where you belong." You can consciously make a decision, with the tools provided in the next chapter, to create the conditions for a better future, by creating a new comfort zone, a level to which you will be drawn to perform.

Am I saying that all comfort zones are unwise and even useless? Not necessarily. But there may be some that are, especially those that prevent you from becoming all that you are capable of becoming.

If your image of "truth" and "reality" is based on incorrect data, then you have no recourse but to make decisions and take actions that ultimately are unwise and inaccurate. Typically, human beings rationalize more than they are rational. It's perfectly natural to gather data to support your dominant beliefs in order to prove to yourself that you really are who you think you are.

Positive thoughts trigger positive images and emotion that lead to positive actions that help create a NEW you! I've said it over and over again – success is not just about who you are, but rather what you are capable of becoming. See yourself TODAY as if you already were the person you intend to become. Create such vivid pictures that you think you are already there. The following stories are about some individuals who have been able to do just that!

Vern Brooks, better known by his friends as "Brooksie," celebrated his 98<sup>th</sup> birthday at the barbershop where he was a practicing barber. Besides working 7:30 A.M. to 3:00 P.M., Monday through Friday, you'd find Brooks enjoying some exercise as he mowed his yard, shot a mean game of pool, or swing his irons on the golf course playing nine holes with his cronies. What was Vern's picture of himself? I'm convinced it was enjoying a lifetime of productivity and a love of life – satisfaction with the journey as well as the destination. Vern didn't see himself as the old man who would retire from the things and people he loved. Instead, he continued to celebrate life.

Irene Horton had a strong picture of herself as an athletic, outdoorsy type and as an 87-year-old water skier. According to the American Water Skiing Association, Irene is the oldest water-skier in

the country. She never learned to slalom ski until she was 52. Irene was cutting through the waves when most people her age were cutting a path down a nursing home hallway.

Walter Jones, at 110-years-young, said, "A lot of people think that when you're 65 you should lie down and die – that you're no good anymore. But you'll find many people who have had better success after 65 or 70. In fact, I made more money after I was 100 than I ever did before." Jones toured the United States in his 22-foot, self-contained motor home, speaking to civic and senior groups about his concept of life after 80 when he was 104. His philosophy: "Worrying never did anybody any good. I figure alcohol, cigarettes, and worry are your worst three enemies, and worry is the worst of all."

Woody Allen flunked motion picture production at New York University and City College of New York, and failed English at New York University. Look at all the great movies we would have missed if Allen had accepted the mistaken belief that he was no good as an actor, a director, or a producer? That's the thing about achieving greatness; not only does it affect the individual who never reaches his potential, but it has a rippling effect on many other lives as well.

What about Geraldo Rivera? He could have accepted a mistaken belief and considered his dreams unreachable when he had to take remedial courses in English and math before he was accepted by the Maritime College of the State University of New York – not to mention some of the hits his professional career took over the years. Did Geraldo let himself be defeated by the negatives in his life? I don't think so. Instead, he saw himself successful. He kept believing he was a journalist, a reporter, and a television personality and he fulfilled his own prophecy!

Malcolm Forbes did not make the staff of *The Princetonian*, the school newspaper at Princeton University. He didn't let that deter him from believing in his ability to achieve greatness. He went on to build Forbes Magazine into one of the great magazines in the world. He had what it takes, and so do you!

What do you have in common with these people? Answer – You have the power within you to change. Your ability to achieve has always been there; your talent just needs to be tapped. Your belief in yourself may need a boost. Now that you recognize you can change your self-image, I'll provide you with the "how to's" in the next chapter.

You are what you believe you can become! If you have been a poor student in the past, it doesn't mean you're dumb, and it doesn't mean you are to remain a poor student. If you've always dreamed of becoming a foreman on a construction site, don't give up. Start now to change your self-image. Picture yourself with the education and knowledge to make a great contribution in the industry of your choice, and your self-image will work to align itself with your belief. You most likely have the freedom and capability to become great. So, what are you waiting for? The new you is really the old you – it's always been there waiting to be recognized! You are worthy of success. Each day silently affirm that you are the type of person with whom you would like to spend the rest of your life.

Refuse to be trapped into believing that who you were (or are) is who you will always be. Your power to "become" is unlimited starting with the way you "see" yourself!