

Lyceum 111, September 18, 2025 – – a forum to Think, Discuss, Share, and Learn from one another. Your input is welcomed - Iron sharpens iron.

Neighborhood “The 1826, in Connecticut, a farmer named Josiah Holbrook started a school for ‘the general diffusion of knowledge and raising the moral and intellectual taste’ of Americans. In those days, the opportunities for higher education were limited to those venerable old universities that had long served the upper crust. Holbrook’s vision was to make learning – practical, liberal, and humane – available to working people of all kinds. He named his school the Lyceum, after the garden where Aristotle once taught his students philosophy.... We need to go deeper than the superficial fights that characterize public life. We need to return to the first principles and meet each other there as human beings.”– Nathan Beacom, Plough Magazine, Autumn 2023, p. 9.

“A dog is not a thing. A thing is replaceable. A dog is not. A thing is disposable. A dog is not. A thing does not have a heart. A dog’s heart is bigger than any ‘thing’ you can ever own.” -Elizabeth Parker.

In his book, Phoenix Flight Manual – Rising Above the Ashes of Ordinary Existence by Anthony Dallmann-Jones, Ph.D., he proposes the Primary Domino Thought Theory. All your behaviors of your personal development are words, emotions, and deeds that are the cumulative result of a string of thoughts preceding them. The first thought in a particular string of thoughts is called the Primary Domino Thought. It is the most powerful thought in the string because it starts with all the other thoughts that eventually lead to your behavior. The Primary Domino Thoughts that follow can be used to change your thinking, and therefore, your behavior. Practice them daily and gradually weave them into your thinking pattern. They will become part of you. Eventually, they will be you. We are reminded that the way I think determines the way I feel, and the way I feel determines the way I act. -Roger J. Vanden Busch.

I have taken the liberty to add--

10 Personal Development Lessons from History’s Greatest Minds for your review, reflection, and application to your on-going personal psychological and spiritual development.

1. "Know Thyself." Socrates.

Before you chase success, money, or fame, ask: *Who am I really? *Socrates nailed itself-awareness is the bedrock of growth. Most people sprint toward goals without understanding their why, then wonder why they feel empty.

Take time to reflect. Journal.

Meditate. Figure out what lights you up.

When you know yourself, decisions become effortless. Ever notice how kids do not overthink their passions?

Channel that.

2. "In the Middle of Difficulty Lies Opportunity." – Albert Einstein.

Einstein was called "slow" as a kid, got rejected from jobs, and faced brutal criticism. Sound familiar?

His secret? He treated obstacles like puzzles, not dead ends.

When life knocks you down, ask: What is this teaching me? Lost your job? It is pushing you toward entrepreneurship.

Heartbroken? Space for self-love.

Chaos is not your enemy; it is your cocoon.

3. "He Who Opens a School Door Closes a Prison." – Victor Hugo.

Learning = freedom. Not just formal education—curiosity about everything.

Read biographies. Watch documentaries.

Talk to strangers. The more you know, the fewer limits you will tolerate.

Ever met someone stuck in a dead-end mindset? It is like they have imprisoned

themselves.

Books, podcasts, even travel are all skeleton keys to a bigger life.

4. "It Always Seems Impossible Until It's Done." – Nelson Mandela.

Mandela spent 27 years in prison... then became president. If he had listened to "reality," South Africa's history would have been different.

Your brain loves whispering; this will not work. Mandela's lesson? Ignore it.

Most "impossible" goals are just untested. Start small.

One step. Then another.

The "how" reveals itself after you commit.

5. "We Are What We Repeatedly Do." – Aristotle.

Forget motivation—habits run your life. Scroll Instagram first thing?

That is a habit. Work out daily.

Habit. Aristotle knew excellence is not a grand gesture; it is brushing your teeth, then writing five hundred words, then showing up again.

Want to be a writer? Write daily.

Healthier? Meal prep Sundays.

Your rituals define you more than your dreams.

6. "Success Is Stumbling from Failure to Failure with No Loss of Enthusiasm." – Winston Churchill.

Churchill's career was a rollercoaster—political failures, WWII stress, yet he kept his wit and will. Modern lesson?

Fail fast, stay excited. Most people quit because they expected a straight line.

Spoiler: success looks like a toddler's crayon drawing—messy, chaotic, but colorful. Fall.

Grin. Repeat.

7. "Happiness Depends Upon Ourselves." – Buddha.

Think a new car or partner will fix you? Buddha would chuckle.

Joy is an inside job. Notice how kids find wonder in puddles?

Adults need "conditions." Try this: one week, no blaming external stuff for your mood. Just you, your breath, and choosing contentment.

Radical? Yes.

Life-changing? Absolutely.

8. "If You Want to Go Fast, Go Alone. If You Want to Go Far, Go Together." – African Proverb.

Ever seen a lone wolf thrive long-term? Neither have I.

Your circle dictates your growth. Toxic friends?

You will absorb their fears. Ambitious, kind peers?

You will level up unconsciously. Audit your squad.

Keep the ones who make you braver. Growth is not a solo sport; it is a relay.

9. "Do Not Pray for an Easy Life, pray for the Strength to Endure a Difficult One." – Bruce.

Comfort is the enemy of growth. Bruce Lee trained until his hands bled then kept going.

Modern life sells convenience like it is a virtue. Resist.

Want strength? Lift heavier.

Better focus? Meditate longer.

Growth hides in the "this sucks" zone. Lean in.

10. "Be the Change You Wish to See in the World." – Mahatma Gandhi

Tired of negativity? Stop contributing to it. Gandhi did not wait for permission—he embodied peace.

Complaining less, creating more, choosing kindness even when it is hard... that's how revolutions start. Not with rallies, but with you today.

So, which lesson hit you hardest? Time to pick one and live it.

The ancients already did the challenging work, now it is your turn. Game on.

How about you? What are your words of wisdom in enhancing and strengthening our personal development.

Here are a couple of mine:

- 1. My shortcomings are part of me, merely challenges to be overcome or traits to be accepted – my choice. "The SOOS Theory = stepping stone or opportunity OR obstacle or stumbling block."**
- 2. Others accept me as I present myself, which I can choose to do in the best possible light. "Be a person of integrity, balancing your inner and outer selves into a harmonious balance of authenticity and transparency."**
- 3. "Manure is stinky, but necessary for growth."**

In conclusion, to a certain degree, everyone can consciously control his or her actions. You can deliberately set your mind on a particular approach to life. You do not have to entertain every thought that enters the threshold of your mind. Every day we make many conscious and unconscious choices. By becoming more aware of your thoughts, you can ensure that you will make choices that will serve to relax you, reduce your stress, and improve your health, happiness, enjoyment, and overall psychological and spiritual maturity.

Roger J. Vanden Busch