

Day 23



Seven little words with 3 powerful directives that can totally transform your life.

1. If you're not happy with the results you've gotten in your life so far, one of the factors is undoubtedly that there are more things you need to know. That's the first directive: Do something to gain the knowledge you need to help you make a change. Now you can easily tell me, "Maggie, I *KNOW* I shouldn't turn to chocolate or alcohol when I'm stressed or scared or bored or lonely, but it doesn't stop me from *DOING* it." True. But what you don't know in that situation is how to find another coping mechanism for those feelings--*THAT'S* the knowledge you need to go after. Once you know better, you can do better. So make it your mission to find the answer. Read a book; explore the web for blogs on the subject; sign up for a newsletter with weekly tips on emotional eating; find someone who's overcome the same problem and pick their brain; go to a counselor. No matter what aspect of your life you're trying to improve, the first step to having a different future is to gain the knowledge that you've been missing.
2. Second directive: *DO*. Maybe you've had this experience: You read an article or book, listen to a message in church on Sunday, or see something on television that really strikes you. "Wow...what a profound message! I totally identify with that! That person is absolutely right...I should do that." And then you promptly forget about it when you fall back into your daily routine.

Knowing does no good if you don't ACT on it.

So when you find a gem of wisdom that can improve your life, make sure you don't lose it. Write it down and post it on your bathroom mirror, in your car, or on your computer desktop. Develop a habit so it becomes part of your daily routine. Example: Napoleon Hill, author of *Think and Grow Rich*, found a common trait of successful businessmen was that each one made a point to reflect on their lives with gratitude everyday. Knowing that successful people demonstrate gratitude, you could develop a habit of starting and/or ending each day by listing 5 things you're grateful for. Nothing changes without action.

3. Hmm...*KNOW* and *DO*. Only two verbs in the statement. What could the third directive be? That one is implied: Forgive yourself. You've screwed up in the past because you didn't know a

better way. Forgive yourself. By that I don't mean that you should shirk responsibility or play the victim, but it's futile and unproductive to dwell on past mistakes or let them trick you into thinking that your future has to be the same as your past. You didn't know better. Okay, DO SOMETHING to increase your skill set so you will know better next time. Learn from it, then let it go. Interestingly, I first heard this Maya Angelou quote from Oprah, who has an amazing capacity for forgiveness. She was raised by relatives who inflicted unspeakable abuse on her, but fairly early in life she was able to come to this conclusion: "I can forgive them, because I know they were doing the best they could given the circumstances that they grew up with and what they knew at the time." WOW! I don't know that I could be so merciful. But what if instead of choosing this attitude, she begrudged them, blamed them, and allowed her horrible experiences to define her view of the world and her own potential? She certainly wouldn't have overcome her circumstances and created the empire she did. Are you limiting your future by holding onto your past?

**LEARN - ACT - FORGIVE
MOVE FORWARD**