

A Short Guide To An Inspired Life

By

Walt Hampton

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Ignite your dreams. Live with purpose, passion and possibility.

-- Walt Hampton, *Journeys on the Edge*

Sometimes folks ask me how I do it "all:" the time off, the travel, the adventure, the great partner, the fun. I actually don't do it "all" or have it "all." But I do have it pretty good. I would say that I have the life I want. And I am grateful every day for the many blessings I enjoy.

You can have the life you want too. You really can. There are just 3 steps. They're simple steps. Simple - but not necessarily easy. All you need to do is live in **AWE**.

Step 1 Become Aware

So often we drift through our days. Weeks become months become years. We do things repetitively without thought or reflection. We get mired in drudgery, bogged down in minutia and caught in routine. We feel trapped. And hopeless.

But, if we can become **aware** that we have choices, that we're never really caught, then there's a chance for hope, and a promise of freedom.

And here's the scoop: we *always* have choices. We get to choose what bills we'll take on, what expenses we'll undertake, what obligations we'll shoulder, what careers we'll pursue, what relationships we'll stay in. We get to choose what we do and how we spend our time.

This step to becoming aware of our choices is challenging because we feel snared by responsibility. Our ability to choose gets caught up in and cloaked by what we think we "should" do, and what believe we "ought" to do, rather than what we truly "want" to do. Yet in failing to make the choices that nurture our souls, we deny our most authentic selves to the world.

Victor Frankl taught us that we always have a choice - even in the most heinous of circumstances. To say we have no choice is to abdicate. Be **aware**: we get to choose. And choose we must.

Step 2 Decide on the What

Once you really are aware that you have choices, you can be like a kid in a candy shop: looking at all of the possibilities, considering the myriad options, contemplating the wonders that await you.

Immerse yourself. Revel in the infinite.

Then decide. Decide on **what** it is you truly want.

You can have anything. But you usually can't have everything - at least not all at once.

I choose to be in my own business because of the freedom it gives me. I would rather have the time than the money. I love the look of a Lexus. But I drive a Subaru Outback, because I prefer to have a car that gets me to remote mountain trail heads than one that looks good. There are lots of things I love. But I tend to choose experiences over things because they mean more to me.

Choosing the “*what*” is not hard, as long as you know what you value. I value fitness, freedom, adventure, travel and a rich creative life. When faced with a choice, I choose in favor of what I value. This means I get up at 4:30 in the morning to run rather than sleeping in, that I forego some new business opportunities so that I can travel and adventure, that I write in the evenings instead of watching television.

So to decide on what you really want, figure out what you really value. But be careful here. You can easily be deceived. You can say that you value marriage and family and yet work 80 hours a week. You can say that you value your health and still smoke a pack a day.

Brian Tracy says this: "Perhaps one of the greatest discoveries in history is this simple truth: you become that which you think about most of the time. No one is smarter than you, no one is better than you, no one has more inborn talent than you. But successful people, at one point or another, set their minds on becoming that which they

have now become."

"The sad fact," says Tracy, "is that people are poor because they have not yet decided to be rich. People are overweight and unfit because they have not yet decided to be thin and fit. People are inefficient time wasters because they haven't yet decided to be highly productive in everything they do."

You will do what you value most. If you don't like what you're doing, readjust your values.

You are the designer of your life. Decide ***what*** it is you want.

Step 3 Execute Without Compromise

You can let life happen to you. Or you can take control.

Once you have become aware of your power to choose, once you have designed your ideal life, you must take action. You cannot have the life you want without it.

If you want a meaningful family life, be home more than you are away. If you want to be fit, go to the gym. If you want to travel, take the vacation. If you want a golf partner, stop dating mall rats.

Make the plan. Work the plan. ***Execute*** the plan!

Without compromise. This means when the client says he wants to meet on Saturday, you say that you can't. This means when you're tired and sore, you go for the workout anyway. This means when the year-end report is incomplete, you still get on the plane for your vacation.

When I first became a single dad, I lamented that it would be years before I might return to the great mountains of the world. With kids at home, I couldn't imagine how I could ever climb. But I valued the mountains and couldn't fathom compromise. I figured out a way to go to the Andes with my young boys and hike the Inca trail. I lived my joy and gave to them a gift they'll never forget.

An unwillingness to compromise may strike you as controversial, selfish and self-centered. I'm not saying that you shouldn't compromise when comes to the choice of what movie you'll see on Friday night or whether you're going out for Italian or Chinese. But when it comes to values - when it comes to the fundamentals of the life that you want to have - you cannot settle, you cannot compromise. If you do, you will be miserable. And everyone around you will know it.

Hold fast to what you value most. Go boldly in the direction of your dreams.

Live in AWE

- Become **A**ware that you always have a choice
- Design **W**hat life you want to have
- **E**xecute the plan, without compromise

Three simple steps to the life you want.

Jim Rohn once said, "If you don't design your own life plan, chances are you'll fall into someone else's plan. And guess what they have planned for you? Not much."

Time is not your friend. Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "most people die with their music still in them." Don't let this be you.

Get busy.

Walt Hampton is author of *Journeys on the Edge: Living a Life That Matters*. He is a dynamic motivational speaker, driven entrepreneur, sought-after leadership trainer and executive coach. Visit him at his popular website: www.walthampton.com