

Becoming *the Person* You Want *to Be*



Discovering True Dignity and Worth

Dr. James B. Richards

NATIONAL BEST-SELLING AUTHOR

BECOMING THE PERSON YOU WANT TO BE

DISCOVERING YOUR
DIGNITY AND WORTH

Dr. JAMES B. RICHARDS

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DEDICATION

It is the quality of our friendships that determine the quality of our lives. Great friends are rare, and lifelong friends are a treasure. My life's accomplishments are as much the investment of my friends as they are of my own efforts. It is, after all, my friends who played such a major role in influencing my life to become the person I am today.

In loving appreciation for a heart-connection that has endured for a large part of our lives, Brenda and I dedicate this book to two of the greatest friends we have ever known. Don and Edwina McCaslin, thank you.

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INTRODUCTION: THE KEY

We all know the many promises Jesus made in God's Word. When we commit our lives to Christ, we come to the Kingdom of God hoping, expecting our lives to be different, and in many ways they are. Dramatically different! Yet we still seem to struggle to actually live our dreams. We initially make some headway, but then we stall out in our Christian walk.

Entropy is a law of physics that says anything left to itself will tend toward disorganization. This same law that works in the natural world also works in the realm of the heart. Jesus used the laws of nature to help us understand the laws of the heart. The apostle Paul said, *"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead"* (Romans 1:20).

Based on this spiritual law and dozens of other scriptural examples, if we are not investing in our life it falls apart. I think we all know that. I believe most people are doing all they know to do to improve their personal character and the quality of their lives. The fact that you've picked up this book says you are someone who is serious about personal development. You are not willing to settle. You want all that Jesus died to give you.

Over twenty-five years ago, I developed what I now call the Law of Personal Investment. I made some decisions about investing in my life that brought dramatic transformation. I had always had a good prayer life. Since the time I accepted Jesus, I have always read my Bible. I studied the Word as a serious disciple. But, as I walked with God, I learned that just spending time doing things from a serious heart was not enough. The old adage “practice makes perfect” is actually misleading. According to Tony Robbins, a leader in the field of personal coaching, practice doesn’t make perfect...it just makes permanent!

If you practice your golf swing improperly, you don’t improve. In fact, you usually get worse. I know musicians who practice every day, but they don’t improve. Their practice sessions are spent playing the same songs they already know, the same way they’ve always played them. They don’t improve because they don’t know how to practice in a way that brings personal development.

You may be new to the world of personal investment, but I would bet that almost every person who picks up this book has tried a lot of things. You have been diligent, but you have not gotten the results you expected. You now realize that the amount of time you put into personal development is no indicator of your return. You are now asking new questions like, “How do I make the kind of life investments that would really reap the kinds of results I want to see?” You are looking for the “key”!

My good friend Ron McIntosh, director of Victory Bible Institute in Tulsa, Oklahoma, recently shared an example that I thought addressed this issue perfectly. In a leadership meeting he gave a staff member a key and asked her to go outside the room. The door was locked behind her.

INTRODUCTION: THE KEY

At the appropriate time she was to use the key to re-enter the room.

At the designated signal she attempted to unlock the door. She vainly struggled to enter the room, but the door would not open! She persisted in her efforts. She even called out for help, but all to no avail. The door would not open. Then he asked the leaders attending the lecture, "What should she have done? Should she have tried harder? Should she have tried longer? Did she have enough faith? Did she really want to get back in the room?" Finally he said, "None of those things would have helped." He finally revealed, "She had the wrong key."

Then he continued to explain that as leaders we have assumed people didn't really want to move forward. We have blamed their lack of faith. We have questioned their commitment. We have told them they needed to try harder, pray more, cry out to God, and a plethora of other "spiritual gymnastics." But the truth is we have never given them the right key.

No matter how sincere you are, no matter how hard you try, without the right key you will not open the door to the life you want, the life God promised, the life Jesus died to give you. In this book, I will give you what I believe is the key. It's not a mystery, and it's not difficult. In fact, it's so simple that we've overlooked it, scoffed at it, and tried every other approach. I will take you back to the very fundamentals of Christianity. I will introduce you to the secret key to positive, painless, permanent, effortless change!

This is not a philosophical idea conjured up at my desk as I searched for sermon material. The key I will share with you is a reflection of my personal journey with God. It was forged in the crucible of my life and proven through thirty

years of ministry. Thousands of desperate and struggling people have applied this to their lives. Business people have used this key to move forward in their businesses and careers. Ministers have employed this tool to break through to the next level of growth. Untold numbers of men and women have used this principle to become the kind of spouse that builds a loving marriage.

Just as thousands of others have used this key to open the door to their future, you too can open the door before you. You can be the person you want to be. And the journey will be an incredible, exciting, enjoyable adventure!

CHAPTER ONE

THE POSITIVE POWER OF DESIRE

The young man and his wife were new to my church. Much of their short Christian experience had been spent in a church that didn't embrace the promises of God. Instead of learning about Jesus' promises to meet our needs and satisfy our longings, they had been led to believe that refusing their natural and normal desires was some sort of obligatory proof of their love for God.

"I'm such a bad person," the young husband insisted repeatedly. It took most of the first hour to get him to pinpoint what exactly made him think so poorly of himself. "I just lust after so many things," he reluctantly admitted. When he jumped out of his seat, I thought he was going to run out the door. Instead he began to pace the floor. Apparently the strain of his confession was more than he could manage while sitting still.

In a flash, his sorrow turned to anger. "I want things!" he angrily declared as he paced my office floor. His statement expressed a deep frustration. Then he spun on his heels, leaned across my desk to look me in the eye, and declared, "And I don't care what you think about it!"

"I think you should have things," I announced in response. He stared at me with stunned surprise. I continued, "As a matter of fact, the Bible says that God knows you

have need of things. And as long as you keep Him first in your life, He actually promises to fulfill your heart's desires."

He froze. His gaze was locked onto mine. He wrinkled his forehead as if to momentarily consider this concept. But it was too foreign for him. Before he could even grasp this truth, he began to defend the wrong doctrine that had created his situation and brought him to my office in the first place.

When I finally calmed him down, I began to explain, "Desire can be the most positive or the most destructive force in your life. It can cause you to wrap your life around God, or it can cause you to abandon God. It can be the first step toward temptation or the first step toward faith. Desire becomes an incredibly positive power when you know God wants to meet your needs and fulfill your desires." The counseling session ended with a homework assignment to look at the scriptures in the New Testament that spoke of desire and promises.

*Desire can be a positive
or a destructive force in your life.*

This young man's hunger for fulfillment soon led him on a quest for God that was beyond anything he had ever known. When God became his true source of provision, his entire life changed dramatically. When he discovered that Jesus had died to make all of the promises of God available to him, his love and appreciation for God multiplied. A peace, love, and gratefulness overtook his anger. His desires never again took him away from God. They took him full force toward God as his only source for the fulfillment of all of his needs and desires.

Market research tells us there are a few clear-cut things that nearly everybody wants. We all actually want the same things. We want to be happy, healthy, and prosperous and have loving relationships. Problems arise, however, when we look around and see the gap between what we desire and what we are experiencing. We then struggle to explain that gap based on our spiritual beliefs or background.

For some who are caught in this struggle, life becomes total disillusionment. Hopeless people see no possibilities of reaching their dreams. They see no way to fill the void between what they have and what they want. The realization comes that something must change in order for them to reach their goals. Some honestly believe that in order for them to get what they themselves want, everyone around them must change. So they set about to take charge of everyone else's life while their own lives spin further out of control. Still others feel threatened by the thought that they themselves may have to change to reach their goals.

In reality, the idea of personal change, as ominous as it may be, holds the only legitimate hope of fulfillment. Many people shrink back from the challenge of change. It looks too frightening or difficult. Other people, though, forge ahead with reckless abandonment toward their goals, ready to pay the ultimate price of personal change in order to live their dreams. What is it that motivates these people to overcome the threat of change? The answer is simple: desire!

*You have to change
in order to live your dreams.*

But where do these determined people find such strong desire? The secret is in their expectation of positive benefits.

That's right! The expectation of fulfillment, satisfaction, and pleasure causes an increase in desire. These people are willing to pay the price of any challenge to reach their desired goals. Their expectations create a desire that is so strong that nothing will deter them from their course.

So how can we know when we have enough desire to carry us the distance to our dreams? I've heard the answer to that question in an ancient Eastern story about a man who sought enlightenment. He spent years trying to find someone who could help him in his search. Eventually he heard of a sage who lived alone as a monk. When the hungry seeker located the monk he found him meditating by a stream. He rushed to him and pleaded, "Will you help me? I seek enlightenment." To his utter amazement, the old monk grabbed his head and pushed it under the water.

After what seemed an eternity the old monk pulled the man's head up from the water. With the first breath, the seeker began complaining, "What are you doing? I just want you to show me how to find...." Before he could finish his statement the old monk simply pushed his head back under water and held it for an even longer time. Once again, when the man's head emerged, with his first breath he fussed, complained, and argued. The third time the monk pushed his head under water and held it until the seeker thought he would drown.

When his soaked head emerged from the water, the seeker simply gasped for breath. He had no thought of his complaints and arguments. He just filled his lungs with refreshing air. Then the old monk calmly said, "When you desire enlightenment as badly as you wanted that breath of air, you will find it."

When we want something more than we want anything else, we will find it whatever the cost. God said it this way: *“And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart”* (Jeremiah 29:13). When our desire is strong, we are highly motivated. We overcome obstacles. We refuse to become sidetracked by the many distractions, no matter how legitimate. We are determined. We will not be denied! We succeed in finding the things we desire when we seek them passionately. All else becomes a trivial pursuit.

Most of us, however, are conditioned to choosing a lifestyle in which we have the greatest amount of pleasure and the least amount of pain. It is called settling! There are things we wish we had, but our conditioning keeps us from seeking them. There are things we know we need, but habitual choices prevent us from attaining them. There are even things we have adapted to that cause us pain and guilt, but our fear of change keeps us from finding deliverance from the situation.

Many times life steals our passion. We are like the proverbial frog in the pot. Every day the heat gets turned up a little until we are being cooked and don't even realize it. We relinquish our dreams to the limitations defined by our experience. We lose our uniqueness to the rules of society. We surrender our destiny to a dwarfed sense of self. We are so caught up in the grind of living, like the frog in the pot, that we surrender more of our lives to mediocrity every day and don't realize it.

In this mundane maze, our goals are reduced to dreams, our dreams are diminished to wishes, and our wishes melt away into fantasies. Then one day we put away our fantasies and accept what we falsely call “real life.” We are alive, but

our dreams are dead! Our bodies go through the motions of daily activity while our hearts ache for fulfillment.

If this describes you, it's not too late. To recover your life, the first thing you've got to do is resurrect your desire. Let yourself dream again. Use your imagination to consider all the pleasure and fulfillment that waits in the realization of your dreams. Accept the fact that God wants you to live your dreams while walking with Him! In fact, God wants us to dream! Part of His purpose for taking us through transformation is so that we can live our dreams.

Let yourself dream again.

The prophet Joel spoke of a day when "*old men shall dream dreams*" (Joel 2:28). That day is now. The Holy Spirit has been poured out. If you are washed in the blood of Jesus, then His Spirit is in you and upon you. The Holy Spirit will restore your dreams and give you the power to live them, regardless of how old you are!

To resurrect your passion you must recover some of your dreams. So where do you start? You don't start by clearly identifying your ultimate dreams. You begin simply by recognizing the things in your life that are not as you would have them. Then you must define how you want them to be. Once you have a picture of what you want, then allow yourself to experience the expectations of positive results.

Here's a step-by-step process that will lead you away from disillusionment and into the fulfillment of your desires.

1. Make a list of ten things in your life with which you are not satisfied.

2. Make a list of all the pain, suffering, or sorrow in your life as a result of this diminished lifestyle.
3. Make a list of how you would have those things to be if there were no limitations.
4. Make a long list of as many benefits as you can think of that you believe these changes would bring to your life, your happiness, your personal peace, your relationships with others, and your relationship with God.
5. Make sure your list of benefits is at least twice as long as the list of pain and problems. The longer the better!
6. Imagine what it would be like to enjoy those benefits. Try to come to the place where you would know what it actually feels like to experience the benefits.
7. Ponder this until you feel passion to have those benefits in your life, even if it takes days or weeks. First thing in the morning and last thing at night is the best time to think on these things. See and feel yourself enjoying the benefits of these changes.
8. Acknowledge to God that you know He wants you to have the best.
9. Affirm to yourself that reading this book and taking the suggested steps are essential to getting you where you want to go.
10. Make a decision that you will seek until you find.

We hope you've enjoyed this free sample of *Becoming the Person You Want to Be*. For more information on purchasing *Becoming the Person You Want to Be*, please visit <http://www.truepotentialmedia.com/product/becoming-the-person-you-want-to-be/>

We all want happiness and health; the desire for loving relationships and prosperity grows stronger with each day. We are hungry to be all that God wants us to be and eager to do what He wants us to do. We long to discover our destiny and live our dreams to their fullest.

Yet, the journey is often fraught with setbacks, disappointments, and wrong turns.

In this groundbreaking book, best-selling author Dr. James B. Richards will shatter the ultimate illusion that limits every believer. He will help you connect to a new sense of self-worth that will unleash the power of God in your life in a way you have never experienced before. For the first time you will know how to simply put off the old man and put on the new.

No more counseling, no more mysteries, no more confusion!

Join Dr. Richards as he reveals the secrets to a healthy sense of self-worth. You will discover how to connect to the only true source of identity, self-image, and dignity.

You can become the person you want to be—and enjoy the journey!

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