

# ATTRIBUTES FOR AN EFFECTIVE LIFE

**By Raymond Gerson**

## INTRODUCTION

In the process of acquiring an education, we learn about many important subjects such as math, science, and history. I believe our educations should also present ideas that help us develop into the best human beings we can become. To fulfill our potential, we need values and attributes that enrich our lives and the lives of others. These qualities, the result of our inner development, will allow us to mature emotionally and spiritually.

This article contains my ideas regarding ten attributes for living an effective life. These traits will help you be more effective in school, work, relationships, and other areas of your life.

Developing these ten attributes builds character, which serves as a springboard for dynamic action. Character is the foundation from which we can live effective lives.

## BALANCE

- We can live a balanced and fulfilling life by focusing on spiritual development as a top priority, and by devoting time to the other areas: physical, mental, career, financial, family, and social/recreational.
- We can provide balance in our lives by maintaining our health and vitality; developing a clear mind and a positive mental attitude; discovering our talents and making a contribution in a meaningful career; meeting our financial needs and obligations; taking care of our responsibilities to family; taking time out for fun; and building meaningful friendships.
- Both time alone and time with others are needed for mental and spiritual well-being.

## FAITH

- Belief in ourselves and trust in a Higher Power can help us through difficult times.
- An attitude of surrender, “Thy will be done,” is the highest form of prayer.
- “Letting go and letting God” enables us to accept and appreciate life in all its variety.
- Faith in a Higher Power gives us stability and peace.

## FORGIVENESS

- Forgiveness comes from a compassionate heart.
- We can find the courage to forgive ourselves and others.
- Revenge and violence are often the result of a lack of forgiveness.
- A forgiving attitude gives us peace of mind.

## HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

- Being honest gives us self-respect and faith in ourselves. According to Shakespeare, “No legacy is so rich as honesty.”
- We can be honest without injuring the feelings of others.
- Honesty is what we do when no one is watching as well as when others are present.
- Integrity includes honesty and involves adhering to our values and principles.
- Persons of integrity do not compromise their principles for money, comfort, or quick results.

- Integrity requires courage and the strength of one’s convictions.
- There is congruency of thought, word, and action in the person of integrity. This person serves as an admirable example for others.

## INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

- Positive relationships revitalize us and increase our enjoyment of life.
- Relating well with others reduces feelings of loneliness.
- We grow and learn about ourselves through our relationships.
- Perceiving the good qualities in others and showing appreciation are keys to better relationships. According to William James, “The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated.”
- Listening to others is one way to let them know they are important to us.
- As our ability to listen and communicate improves, so does our effectiveness in building successful relationships.
- Although we may disagree with someone, we can choose words that show respect for that person’s point of view.
- Learning to relate effectively with others is a skill that can be acquired.

## LOVE

- When love is awakened in us, other good qualities—such as joy, inner peace, and courage—develop automatically.
- Love is courageous and forgiving.
- Our soul is love. God is love. Love is our essential nature.
- Love enables us to see that all of us are children of one God.

- Now, while we have them in our lives, is the time to love and appreciate others.
- Saints experience the highest form of love: Divine love. They demonstrate our potential to love.

## MOTIVATION

- To achieve anything in life, we must desire a goal and then take positive action to attain it.
- Motivation begins with a strong desire from within oneself. Abraham Lincoln once remarked, “Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any other one thing.”
- To make a wholehearted effort toward our goals, we must be strongly motivated.
- Visualizing our dreams will increase our motivation to achieve them.
- Strong motivation, combined with the will to take action, removes barriers that block our potential.

## PERSEVERANCE

- Perseverance enhances our ability to accomplish goals.
- Perseverance is powerful, like the sustained winds of a hurricane removing obstacles in its path.
- Inner growth and personal transformation require perseverance. John Ruskin put it this way: “The highest reward for a person’s toil is not what they get for it but what they become by it.”
- Our minds are our greatest hindrance. Life’s hardest battles are fought within ourselves. We need courage to win these battles within our mind.

- Deep within us lie reserves we can draw upon to go the distance. We can persevere and overcome our stumbling blocks.

## RESPONSIBILITY

- Responsibility implies that we respond to the needs of the situation at hand.
- We need to determine the difference between unnecessary obligations and appropriate responsibilities.
- Self-improvement is a responsible and unselfish action; it is a prerequisite to effectively helping others. We cannot make a significant contribution to others if we avoid helping ourselves.
- Being true to ourselves and to our commitments is a form of being responsible.

## SELF-CONFIDENCE

- Self-confidence means that one believes in oneself.
- Self-confidence grows as we discover and utilize our strengths and talents to make a positive difference in the world.
- Experiencing a series of small, incremental successes is an excellent way to overcome fear and build self-confidence.
- Faith in a Higher Power can enable us to face life with greater courage and self-confidence.
- As our self-confidence grows, we increase our ability to attain our dreams and enhance our joy of living. Believing that we are worthwhile makes life worth living. William James stated: “These, then, are my last words to you: Be not afraid of life. Believe that life is worth living and your belief will help create the fact.”

## CONCLUSION

Developing these ten attributes enables us to live effective and fulfilling lives. I believe each of us has enormous potential. Each of us is a unique child of God, who is an unlimited source of love, energy, joy, and creativity. We possess vast inner resources from which we can make a contribution. Drawing upon these resources, we can develop ourselves into the best human beings we are capable of becoming. Our lives, therefore, become a blessing, not only for ourselves, but for all the people whose lives we touch.

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Raymond Gerson has a masters in psychology and over forty years experience teaching personal and career development. Career counselor, job placement specialist, trainer, and former owner of an executive search business, he teaches college success strategy courses. He is the author of five books, including *Create the Life You Want*. Two of his e-books, *How to Create the Job You Want* and *Effective Job Search Strategies* are available for free at <http://www.raymondgerson.com> along with numerous articles on success and study skill strategies.