

**How to AVOID
Life's 10 Biggest
~~Skrew-ups~~
SCREW-UPS**

**Control Your Destiny by
Making Smart Choices**

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Life's 10 Biggest Screw-ups to Avoid

1. Living by Feelings
2. Careless Money Management
3. Misguided Love, Sex and Relationship Choices
4. Not Following Wise Counsel
5. An Expectation of Entitlement
6. Making Unwise Educational Choices
7. Neglecting to Embrace a Moral Code
8. Neglecting to Build Character
9. Neglecting Duty and Responsibility
10. The Obsessive Desire for Pleasure

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PREFACE

Presently, my life spans almost 7 decades. Maybe that seems like a long time to some readers. I certainly thought so when I was a teenager. For me, life has flown by at “warp speed” picking up momentum the older I get. I can’t allow life to continue at its current pace without slowing down and sharing a composite of life lessons that will help shape my reader’s lives for good.

However, before I get much further, I will first ask you some crucial questions. Are you prepared to make a considerable effort to examine your life and recognize areas that need improvement? Are you willing to become empowered to make positive changes in your life, regardless of how time consuming and challenging it might be? If you can’t answer with an affirmative “yes!”—then I’m sad to say “this book is *not* for you.” But, if you answer “bring it on,” then get ready for an exciting adventure. You’ll experience a life that lifts you from mediocrity to achievement; from a life of quantity to a life of quality.

Certain chapters intertwine together and become a foundation for another. You’ll also notice recurring themes that express themselves throughout each chapter. I challenge you to identify these and take them to heart. People on average only remember 10 percent of what they read. So, serious study and highlighting important passages may help you to retain a higher percentage of information.

I lived the first 19 years of my life mostly by default. Despite what my parents taught me, I just accepted whatever came my way. I let my feelings and emotions rule me and lived accordingly—that

was just easier. Consequently, my life was a mess to say the least. It wasn't until I had an encounter with Wisdom that I began to make smart choices and started walking in a positive direction. I'm not saying that everything went perfect after that. However, my path forward pointed me towards a better life.

I interchange the words *screw-ups* and *mistakes* throughout this book. That's because they are basically both the same—the result of making the wrong life choices. What you read on these pages came about from my personal experiences, what I've observed in other people's lives and through research. These criteria became my prime motivation for writing this book. I've seen many lives devastated by bad decisions. But the fortunate few recovered because they refused to make the same screw-ups, and prospered. I've heard success stories from those who overcame adverse circumstances in their lives through taking charge of them. They demonstrated the winning attitude that says, "I don't allow circumstances to dominate me, I make smart decisions that guide my life." I'm encouraged by their testimonies! Yet other's lives remain broken and their futures negatively influenced. For them, recovery may be time-consuming and difficult; *if* they are willing to pay the price. I hope that my encouraging advice makes this daunting task significantly easier for them.

By the time we graduate from high school our lives are already molded and shaped; at least to a certain extent. So ideally, for the rest of our lives we will continue to learn factual knowledge—and *unlearn* false knowledge—to improve ourselves and grow as a person. In this book, I will help you to accomplish this in the early stages of your life. Most likely, young adults represent the largest demographic of those who read it. Although, I believe it doesn't matter what age you are or the circumstances of your life. Possibly, you're someone in mid-life who can still benefit from the principles contained within these pages. Reversing the effects of negative life events can be powerful and still produce positive results regardless

of your age. These principles are just as relevant and valuable for you; and it's never too late to "download" them to "upgrade" your life!

I propose specific strategies that benefit those determined to improve their life skills. Although effective, they won't help half-hearted individuals lacking in motivation. You may find that your response to some of my suggestions will be "There's NO WAY I'm taking THAT advice!" That's your choice. But I can emphatically tell you that these time-tested principles that I suggest ***REALLY WORK***. I can't stress this enough. I'd be foolish to promote them if I didn't have overwhelming evidence of their effectiveness. I sincerely wish that someone shared these same principles to me when I was young. My desire is to offer you *practical* guidance. In fact, you will find that much of what you read is just plain common sense.

Chapter 7 focuses on the need to develop a moral code. This promotes making good decisions and produces a rewarding, meaningful life. Maybe you still don't know who you really are and why you exist on this earth. I'm hoping that this book helps you to discover your life's purpose and shout "Yes, I was made for this!" (See 'APPENDIX' for the poem titled *What's Life All About?*). Possibly, you're someone who often doubts yourself. In that case, my goal is to help you to project confidence and become your true self; by rejecting influences that seek to conform you to negative core beliefs.

With humility and sincerity, I acknowledge that my entire reason for writing this book is to impart down-to-earth wisdom to my readers. And if you're teachable, you'll receive knowledge and inspiration to live a full and satisfying life. Does this mean I have amazing knowledge that you can't find anywhere else? Absolutely not! My primary goal is to inspire you to make decisions that change your life for the better. I have no other motive. I've avoided mimicking cute sounding phrases or popular clichés used

excessively in popular books on the market today—but rather, to offer you valuable substance. Although, my primary purpose is to encourage you to make the right choices—I want to take it one step further—to inspire you to make a difference in the lives of others. Horace Mann, nineteenth-century educator and politician offers this wise counsel: “Doing *nothing* for others is the *undoing* of one’s self. We must be purposely kind and generous, or we miss the best part of existence. The heart that goes out of itself, gets large and full of joy. This is the great secret of the inner life. We do ourselves the most good doing something for others.”¹ Contrary to what some believe, this truly brings satisfaction and fulfillment to our lives.

I’m not seeking to address the topics in this book in agonizing detail. But instead, to give you an *outline* of what I believe are the most important characteristics of living a prosperous and happy life. I’ve cited sources in the ‘NOTES’ section to make it easier for you to perform extra research if you desire. This will further enable you to form your own conclusions and make the ideal choices for your life. You may find that you’re inspired to take a leap of faith, or possibly, even some calculated risks. This separates you from the many, who because of fear, never venture out of their comfort zone (emphasized in Chapter 1).

Maybe you’ve heard someone say “if only I could live life again, I’d make better choices.” I’ve said that many times too. That’s because the older we get the more we learn from both positive and negative experiences—but wished we learned it sooner. Please take the principles that I provide in each chapter and apply them to your life. You will discover information that specifically applies to you, and perhaps, some doesn’t; but you will need to decide that for yourself. However, if you act with steadfast determination, I guarantee that you’ll experience a rich and rewarding life. Because ***YOU*** have made the right choices...***ON PURPOSE!***