



The Power of Routine

From Jones Loflin-The Speaker With TWO Last Names



As we grow up we stop using such childish tools for ourselves... but should we?

Did your Mom ever create one of those charts where you were supposed to do a certain task every day and then check it off when done? My wife and I have used them with our children for various positive behaviors like reading, practicing the piano, or feeding the dogs. As we grow up we stop using such childish tools for ourselves... but should we?

To get better results in almost any facet of our lives, something has to change. And as John Maxwell says, *"The secret of your success is found in your daily routine."* When I recognized that I was allowing too many email interruptions into my morning, I started routinely turning off my email notifications until noon. To increase the quality time with my 9 year old, I started planning something to do with her every day. Even if it was as simple as watching her practice gymnastics, I wrote it down and checked it off the next time I was looking at my schedule.

You know what happened. After a period of time (research says about 21 days), I didn't need the visual reminder-it was a habit. But without the structured reminders I would never have made the change. And yes, I usually give myself some type of reward when the behavior has become a habit (we really aren't that far removed from our childhood, are we?).

To improve your performance, why not take these steps to develop a fresh routine:

- **Identify 2-3 actions that, done daily, would move your work or personal life in a positive direction.** Don't create a longer list-it's too hard to recall, and you won't always have a reminder in front of you.
- **List the action or behavior on your task list every day.** The act of writing it down multiple times (or typing it) helps the brain make it a hardwired behavior.
- **Create an acronym to help you remember the 2-3 actions.** In my early days of selling programs and training, I used ABC to help me remember that when talking to a potential client, I should A-ask questions, B-build bridges, and C-capture commitment. You might even list this acronym on your task list or post it in an area where you will see it often.

Creating an acronym for your new routine helps you recall it more easily and not spend as much time writing it down.



The Power of Routine

Page 2



Let someone else affirm that your self-discipline and focus was worth the effort.

• Develop a reward for yourself for repeating the behavior for at least a week. You'll be surprised to find, though, that the reward isn't as important as you think. The improved outcomes you are getting as a result of engaging in these new behaviors ARE the rewards.

• Tell someone about your new routine who will celebrate it with you. We all want the "gold star" of approval from someone else. In an interview, Oprah Winfrey said that regardless of whether she was interviewing celebrities or presidents, they ALL asked the same question when the interview was over. The question was, "Did I do okay?" Let someone else affirm that you did more than okay by showing self-discipline and focus.

The key is not to try to start too many new actions at one time. Our brains are lazy, and don't like to think about doing 12 things differently each day.

What are 2-3 actions you could start taking on a daily basis that would improve your professional or personal success?

The secret of your success is found in your daily routine.
-John Maxwell

Jones Loflin is an internationally-recognized author and speaker. His messages focus on change, motivation, time management and work/life blend. He is the author of three books, including *Juggling Elephants* and *Getting the Blue Ribbon*. Jones' new book, *Getting to It*, is now available wherever books are sold. His humor, energy and audience engagement make an **impact** on every member of your group, not just an impression.

Learn more at www.jonesloflin.com

