

SEVEN LIFE FREEDOMS

by Ellyn Davis

We all have seven different facets to our lives, and well-being in a particular facet means we experience a “freedom” in that area of our lives. I call these different facets the “Seven Life Freedoms” and they are:

Spiritual Freedom - having the freedom, the time, and the ability to develop the type of relationship with God that you really want.

Mental Freedom - having peace of mind, the freedom to learn, to think clearly, to be free from destructive, damaging thought patterns, to have a sound mind, and to communicate with others well.

Emotional Freedom- having the freedom to be happy, experience joy and satisfaction in life, and be free from negative, self-defeating emotions.

Financial Freedom - having enough money to live the kind of life that makes the other freedoms possible. This would include all the aspects of having a meaningful, satisfying lifestyle—living where you want to live, having the job you want to have, and having the financial resources and material possessions you need to build the life you believe God has called you to. Having financial freedom makes it easier to pursue all the other life freedoms.

Time Freedom - having the time to spend with the Lord and the people who are important to you, to do the things that you really enjoy, to pursue your real genius, passion and happiness, to give of yourself in meaningful ways, to play!

Relationship Freedom – having deep meaningful relationships with those you love is one of the most precious gifts of all. With time and money freedoms, you can better pursue relationship freedom.

Physical Freedom – having the health to be able to pursue all the other freedoms. With time and money freedom, you can take better care of yourself, exercise, pursue hobbies and activities... live life to the fullest!

The Seven Life Freedoms are all intertwined, and lack in one area of life freedom will negatively impact the other six. By the same token, health and prosperity in one area of freedom will positively affect all of the others. So it is important to nurture each of the life freedoms. I think this may have been what the Apostle John meant when he said, “Beloved, I wish above all things that you would prosper and be in good health, even as your soul prospers” (III John 2).

Over the years, I have counseled a lot of different people—from church members to friends to home schooling families to people starting up a home business—and

what I've found is that invariably the internal conflicts that cause them to seek counseling have resulted from an "imbalance" in their life freedoms.

For example, a mother with five children feels like her life is spinning out of control, when actually she has become so focused on developing family relationships that she has neglected her own spiritual, emotional and mental freedom. Or, a father gets so wrapped up in earning a good living for his family that he neglects the relational side of his life and wonders why he experiences a lack of freedom in that area. Or, on the other hand, a family may be so financially strapped that their lack of financial freedom affects every other area of their lives.

In order to be "whole" people, we need to have a healthy, balanced amount of freedom in each of the seven areas of our lives. And by "healthy," I mean we need to be finding what really matters to us in each area and living out of that. Much of the "ill health" and lack in a particular life freedom comes from not paying attention to the things that really matter to you, because those are the things that, if nurtured, will nourish your spirit, soul, body, and finances.

At the risk of seeming to promote an imbalance, I want to focus on financial freedom for the next few newsletters. For years, in our writing and speaking, we have focused on spiritual, emotional, mental, and relational freedom, so now we are taking an exploratory journey into the land of financial freedom—particularly into the land of building your own home-based business that creates financial freedom for you.

At our recent From Home School to Home Business conference, I asked the participants what financial freedom meant to them, and the answers all boiled down to one thing—having enough money to live the life they wanted to live. There was nothing selfish in what they shared, because the life everyone wanted to live was a productive, fruitful one that honored God and was filled with meaningful relationships and the time and financial resources to minister to others.

SO...What does financial freedom mean to you? If you don't know what you really want as far as financial freedom is concerned, the way you create income and the way you manage your finances may be totally out of sync with what your real desires and values are.

This means you will either settle for less than your heart's true desires, or you will live a life of financial "peaks" and "valleys," or you may eventually find that you've worked hard to climb the ladder of success only to realize that it was leaning against the wrong wall.

Stephen Covey, in his bestseller *The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People*, says, "It's incredibly easy to get caught up in an activity trap, in the busy-ness of life, to work harder and harder at climbing the ladder of success only to discover it's

leaning against the wrong wall. It is possible to be busy—very busy—without being very effective. People often find themselves achieving victories that are empty, successes that have come at the expense of things they suddenly realize were far more valuable to them.”

“How different our lives are when we really know what is deeply important to us, and, keeping that picture in mind, we manage ourselves each day to be and to do what really matters most.”

You must have a passion for what you’re doing

Years ago, there was a popular book called *Do What You Love, the Money Will Follow*. The book’s premise was that if you give yourself to what’s really in your heart to do, then you will find a way to get people to pay you to do it, and money will follow your passion.

That really is true.

Why? Because passion motivates you to take action. In fact, the root words of emotion are “movere” which means “to move,” and “emouvoir” which means to “stir up.” It is our emotions that move us, that stir us to action. You may have such strong will power that you can make yourself do a job or run a business you have little enthusiasm for, but eventually, if your heart is not in it, not only will your work suffer, your life will also suffer.

The great Christian motivational speaker Jack Ziefeld calls this kind of motivating passion your “Core Desire.” He once did a survey of personal coaches and goal setting experts and found that only 3% of their clients actually reached their most important goals. After studying the causes for this low rate of success, Ziefeld concluded that the reason so few people reach their goals is that they have no passion for the goals they have set for themselves, so after awhile they lose motivation to keep pursuing those goals and reach a point where even will-power no longer works.

Ziefeld says to start remembering anything you have ever done or experienced that you KNOW you just loved doing and would like to do again. That’s what a “Core Desire” feels like, and that’s the kind of passion you must have about what you’re doing to be in that 3% that actually achieves their goals.

Successful people have ways of finding and fueling their passion so that their interest level and motivation is sustained. A great deal of the reason they can sustain their passion is that they have gotten in touch with what it is they really want—the life that God created them to live.

So the best place to start in creating your ideal source of income is to think about your ideal life—the life you really want to live, the things that matter so much to you that your passion is sustained even in difficult times.

Once you know what really matters to you and what you want your life to be like, you can start thinking of business ideas that fit your ideal life. Look at all the different elements of your Ideal Life and try to come up with as many ideas as you can for a business that corresponds to how you really want to live your life. Try to come up with 30 or 40 ideas.

When you've got your list of 30 or 40 ideas, start doing a "shallow cut" and narrow the ideas down to your top three or four—the ones that you have the most passion and enthusiasm for and that are most likely to work. These are the business ideas that have the best chance of succeeding.

Once you have your "shallow cut" ideas, it's time to do some research. Use the internet, find books, talk to people in those businesses—in every way you can, find out what those businesses are really like. You are doing this in order to go for the "deep cut," and eliminate all but one idea. That's the idea you will focus your time, energy, and money on developing. And because it is based in your passion, your motivation to make it successful will be sustained, even through difficult times.