21 Essentials to Have Your Best Year Ever in 2002!
(You may pass this report along to others so long as it is not altered in any way.)

NOTE #1: This list was originally part of the materials for my 4-week class, “A More Successful YOU in 2002: Your BEST Year Ever!” Even if you were not part of that class, I think you'll find the ideas helpful and useful – just ignore the references to the class.

NOTE #2: This article has become quite popular and is obviously going to be spread far beyond the class members, and the few clients and friends I first sent it to. Even if you don’t know me or my work, I hope you enjoy the article – I’m glad someone sent it to you and I hope you will, in turn, pass it along – but I also hope you’ll visit my website and sign up for my free newsletter. There are over 250 pages of articles, tips, tools, techniques (and humor!) for your success. And, if you are interested in a personal coach, please contact me! My website is: http://www.philiphumbert.com To pass this article along to your friends, just send them the download link:  http://www.philiphumbert.com/files/21Essentials.pdf And please include a note telling them it’s from you and encouraging them to enjoy it!

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We've spent the past 4 weeks setting the stage to make the new year your most productive, most rewarding, most fulfilling year ever! We've examined the roadblocks that get in your way, we've removed the daily "friction" that ties you down and wears you out, and we've made certain that your goals are truly aligned with your highest aspirations. (When your goals match your dreams and suit your values, nothing can stop you!)

The key to total success is balancing life with work, balancing joy and fun with productivity. Nobody wants to work all the time – "workaholics" have never been very attractive! And few people really want to play all the time – even laying on a beach gets boring after a while. The key is to do the work you love so that there is little or no sense of "effort" involved. The key is to set goals that reflect your passions, our longings and your personal strengths. It's rarely "hard" to master and achieve something you love and that you're good at. (Think of the complex activities you do all the time, perhaps needle-point or other crafts, teaching a child to fly a kite or, for that matter, perfecting the complexities of making love!)

Or, here's another metaphor. Think of building a house with only one tool and no blueprints. It really doesn't matter which tool you pick, a hammer or a saw or a chisel or a shovel. With a shortage of tools and no clear picture of the outcome, building a home would be impossible.
Highly successful people are not necessarily smarter or more gifted, and they certainly are not "luckier" than other people. They simply have more and better tools, and a clear blueprint that is consistent with their values, priorities and aspirations in life.

Here is a list of tools for your "21st Century Toolbox" to make 2002 your "Best Year Ever!" Like tools in a toolbox, they are not necessarily in any one "right" order, and one craftsman will prefer one tool over another. One builder, a more traditional fellow, prefers a good old-fashioned piece of sandpaper to smooth the rough spots, while the woman next to him uses the new power sander. Who cares? Use the tools that suit your personality, your purposes, and your preferences. The traditional guy enjoys the rhythm and soothing sounds of the sandpaper and doesn't mind the time it takes. She believes the power sander does a "superior job" and of course, it takes less time. Both are right.

Mix and match the tools any way you wish, **so long as you get the job done!**

1. Clarify your dreams. Design castles in the sky, so you can build your foundations in the right place, in the right way, to support them. Dream big dreams.

2. Specify your outcomes. Take time to write down your goals, to work out the details, to see what fits and what contradicts. Figure out what you really want, and eliminate the "shoulds".

3. Examine your values and priorities. Socrates noted, "The unexamined life is not worth living." If you are lucky, you will never be stuck with a goal you don't truly want or believe in. On the other hand, goals that match your purpose, your passion, your values and your mission are…easy!

4. Distinguish between desires and mere wishes. There are "the essentials", the highest priorities, the long-term "must haves", and then there are the casual fantasies that come and go. What are your "must haves"?

5. Who's going with you? The poet, John Donne, observed that "no [person] is an island". Few goals can be achieved totally alone, without helpers, colleagues, companions, advisors and cheerleaders. Who else is excited about this? Who are your natural allies and partners? Sign them up!

6. Write it down. There is no exception to this one: goals and projects that are worthy of your time and your life, must be written down, examined, reviewed and detailed over time. Write it down!

7. Read what you wrote. If your "goal" doesn't excite you, if you don't find yourself wanting to read about it, imagine it, talk about it and "see, smell, taste and feel it"
every day, why not? If you care about this thing, read your statement, review your "blueprints" every day.

8. Get a life – part A: While you’re achieving your goals, have fun. Live a little! No one can long endure a Spartan existence hoping to "hit the jackpot" somewhere down the road. This is your life! And, you'll be more productive, you'll be smarter and more effective if you're healthy, rested, and energized every day.

9. Have a life – part B: While your pursuing your goals, enjoy your community. "We get by with a little help from our friends." Build a network, socialize, enlist loved ones to share the burdens and the joys along the way. They say "it takes a village to raise a child", and it takes a village of companions to live the good life.

10. Design a life – Part C: As you move toward your goals, be certain your are building the complete life, the total experience, you really want. Howard Hughes was rich and died alone. Marilyn Monroe was famous and beautiful, and not happy. Money will not buy happiness. That comes from a balanced, loving, "holistic" approach to living well. Move toward the "complete package" you really want.

11. Cut the crap. To achieve anything worth while, quit wasting time. Most people spend far more time on TV, idle chatter and sleep-walking through life than they realize. They engage in activity that is "tension relieving rather than life enhancing". Cut it out.

12. Eliminate friction. High achievers refuse to tolerate the nuisances, irritations and delays that other people endure every day. They hire people to do the chores, they fix things that are broken, they live a "problem free" life. If it annoys you once, that’s life. If it annoys you twice, wake up. If it annoys you three times – eliminate the problem!

13. Surround yourself with quality tools. Technology works – buy the best! Experts can help you – hire the best! Beating your head against a brick wall is rarely an effective way to either cure your headache or remove the wall. Find better tools!

14. Create systems for success. From business leaders to Olympic athletes, to effective parenting, success is the result of planning, organization and focus. Create filing systems, habits and routines that keep you motivated and focused on your most important tasks. Just closing a door or using a telephone answering machine can be a huge step forward. What systems do you need to create?

15. Streamline your life. High achievers have clean desks and clean calendars. Say "yes" to few things – and get used to saying "no". If you're stressed, worried or distracted you are not creating the life you really want. Keep it simple.

16. Enrich your environment. No one does their best work when they are bored or tired or uninspired. Surround yourself with beauty, with your favorite music, with
exciting people, stimulating ideas, interesting books, inspiring stories. "If you ain't dancin', you probably ain't producing!"

17. Get the distinction between complex and complicated. Many processes and outcomes are highly complex – that is what fascinates and excites us about them. When life becomes "complicated" we are generally losing control, getting confused, and becoming unproductive. Complexity is often a good thing; complicated is not.

18. Expect failure. If it's worth doing, it's worth figuring out how to do it, and that may take more than one attempt. Failures fall down, act surprised, get hurt, feel disappointed, then quit. Highly successful people assume there will be dozens of disappointments, unexpected outcomes, additional expenses and a few criticisms along the way. So what? If having the life you want were easy and obvious, you would have done it a long time ago. Duh!

19. Celebrate 100 victories. Never wait to have a party! On your way to the top, celebrate each step, each new solution, each new partnership, insight and discovery. Failures take the many "small" successes in life for granted, discount them, and never get to practice their victory dance. Practice makes perfect!

20. Move in the direction you want to go. Be the person you want to be. Express the attitudes, exhibit the behaviors, do the work and learn the skills of the life you desire. Live and act the part, walk and talk the role, feel and experience the life you want. This is not about "faking it" or fooling anyone, this is consistently preparing yourself for the life you want to live. Annie Dillard: "How we live our days, is how we live our lives."

21. Know the goal after the goal after this one. Plan to live a long time, to achieve much, and to live well. You are permitted to earn more than one fortune, to sail around the world more than once, to be famous for more than one skill. A life without purpose is inherently less thrilling. Collect dreams, nurture big projects. Finally, in the end, nothing is going to change until you take action, until you get real, get to work, and do the things that need to be done. Think of this as item #22 if you wish, but unless on a daily and weekly basis you take action and complete tasks that move you toward your goal, it is unlikely you will ever achieve it. That's just reality.

If you want (for instance) to accumulate savings for retirement, unless you deposit a couple hundred dollars every month, it won't happen. Unless you read, study and learn from people who can teach you how to invest, your savings won't grow. Unless you hang out with folks who value savings and investments more than they value toys, you will spend your money on various gadgets, vacations, toys and goodies. Trust me, if you listen to Madison Avenue and follow the herd to your local mall, and do what the neighbors do, and buy what they buy, you will not accumulate much in the way of retirement savings. That is simply a fact of life.
If you want to change the quality of your relationships, do the things that people who have the kind of relationships you admire, do! Study how they communicate, how they use their time, notice how they handle disagreements, and how they solve problems. Then, take action to move in the direction you want to go. If you wait for someone else to take the first step, or wait for a better day or a better opportunity, or for when you "feel" like it, your life will not change. That is how reality works.

Know what you want, have the courage to write it down, study it, focus your time, your energy and your efforts on your goal, and you will almost inevitably make some progress. Working smart always helps. Having a mentor and surrounding yourself with a supportive environment is helpful. But even random, inefficient and clumsy effort will bring you some success! You can probably do far better than that, but at a minimum, effort will create movement and persistent effort will create some success. This is not a matter of luck or genetic gifts.

A poor, fat, abused, and somewhat unattractive young girl grew up to become Oprah Winfrey. At age 46, a poor single mother in Texas, who had seen and suffered from gender discrimination over and over again, borrowed $500 as a deposit on a $5000 investment, and used her love of the color pink to become Mary Kay Ashe. Grandma Moses didn't start painting until well into her 70's. Roger Bannister was badly burned as a kid and was not supposed to walk normally the rest of his life, so he didn't focus on walking. He decided to run instead, and became the first human to break the 4-minute mile.

Albert Einstein flunked math, and was working as a clerk in the post office when he published his "Theory of Relativity". A few years ago, a kid named Terry Fox was diagnosed with cancer. They cut off his legs below the knee, and told him to be grateful that he was still alive. Instead, he went down to the ocean in Nova Scotia, Canada, dipped his prosthetic foot in the water, ran up the beach and began running across Canada. He ran every day, and the world sat up and took notice. He raised millions for cancer research and inspired millions with his courage.

He never made it, he died about half-way across Canada, near Thunder Bay, Ontario. I suppose some would say that poor kid with the metal legs was a failure. Millions of people around the world, however, would beg to disagree.

A few years ago, a teenage girl was killed by a drunk driver, one of thousands of such tragedies that afflict families every year. It's very sad, and people grieve. That's normal. In this case, what was not normal was that Candy Lightener got MADD and changed our nation's attitudes, our laws, and our behaviors about drunk driving. She took massive, focused and repeated action. She enlisted experts and amateurs to help her. She streamlined her life and surrounded herself with the facts, with the statistics, and with the tools she needed to change our national culture. And that one grieving mom, with a little help from her friends, did it.
What would you like to do with your life? What goals burn inside of you? What desires are big enough and bright enough to challenge you to make the next year a year of transformation, your best year ever? What would you like to do with your one and only remarkable life? Answer that question, clarify it, and make it happen. Just go for it!

To contact the author, please visit my website:
http://www.philiphumbert.com
Email: Coach@philiphumbert.com
Phone: (541) 342-1030

Additional Recommended Resources:

Success is Not an Accident, by Tommy Newberry
http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1886669090/philiphumbert/

Life Strategies, by Phillip C. McGraw, PhD
http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0786884592/philiphumbert/

The Aladdin Factor, by Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen
http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0425150755/philiphumbert/

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, by Stephen R. Covey
http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0671708635/philiphumbert/

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