

Commitment.

A strong word.

That brings powerful results.

Commitment is stronger than motivation...
and that is powerful.

*“This one thing I do, forgetting
those things which are behind,
and reaching for those things which are
before me, I press on toward the mark.”*

—The Apostle Paul

Over the years I have made many commitments.
Most of them (*especially over the past 15 years or so*)
have been written down in my journals or on paper
somewhere.

*Commitment Key: Keep a written record
of your commitments*

Ever wonder why a drivers license
is such a big deal?

Or why there has to be a marriage license?

A written record of a covenant between two people?
I understand some are kept today more than others,
but there is a written record of that commitment
none the less.

My wife and I just passed the 25 year mile marker in our
commitment to one another...in marriage.

I trust you will agree with me as you read this,
that a commitment is stronger than motivation.

That means you're still committed to the “covenant” or
your promise, even on the days you don't feel like it,
or feel motivated to do it, or things get in a knot,
as they eventually will. But your commitment means
you're not basing this “thing” you've committed to on
how you feel or how motivated you are today.

Commitment is stronger than motivation so we decide to
keep going...*to continue.*

*Commitment Key:
Commitment is stronger than Motivation.*

In the early New Testament Church,
one of the great things that happened to the disciples and
their leaders was their **commitment to continue.**

To keep on going.

To stay engaged in the process.

The script says they “*continued steadfastly,*”
doing what they knew they were supposed to do.

In “The Book of the Activities” (*the ACTS of the apostles*),
the commitment to their purpose is clear.

And the results were powerful.

What's your purpose?
Your mission in life?

What work are you engaged in to make a difference in the marketplace and in the lives of others?

If that doesn't sound like a job description where you work, how about a volunteer position or a "cause" that you're passionate about and could commit to advancing?

Commitment Key: Commitment is a cause and a course of action that affects your life in an uncommon way.

If you'd like to give it a try, here's some instruction and inspiration that has helped me with my commitments.

"Before you commit...

*To anyone or anything,
you must first believe."*

—Michael York

You must believe in something,
or there is little or no foundation to build upon.

Walt Disney once said of making dreams come true,

*"When you believe in a thing,
believe in it all the way,
implicitly and unquestionably."*

I have my own list of things that I believe in.
Do you have one?

If not (*or even if it's not written down*),
I encourage you to make a list.

Making a list is a powerful thing that
can begin a process.

A process that may lead you to greater achievements and
incredible accomplishments...

in life and in your work.

One of my favorite lists of "*things to believe in*" comes
from a book by Merrill Oster and Mike Hamel called
The Entrepreneur's Creed.

Here's the list:

I believe in **God** as the First Principle.
I believe in the power of *dreams and visions*.
I believe in using my God-given aptitudes
for *excellence*.

I believe in work as a vocation,
as saying *yes to an authentic life*.

I believe in *giving back* to build a better community.
I believe in going beyond success to *significance*.
I believe in taking calculated *risks*.
I believe in *win-win* relationships.
I believe in the value of *values*.
I believe in *lifelong learning*.

Wow.
Me too.

Do you know what you believe in?
It's the first step in making any commitment.

Commitment Key:
Before you can commit, you must believe.

For every individual,
motivation is a personal thing.
No one can motivate you but you.

As a professional speaker and consultant I have often heard managers or executives say...
“We need you to come out and
motivate our people!”

Sorry, can't do it.
I can't be motivational to them, and neither can you.
Why not? Simple, good questions reveal the answer.
What is motivation?

Webster says:

Inciting action, cause, inducement,
purpose... **CAUSING MOTION!**

A reason for doing or accomplishing.

And you need a better reason than someone else telling you that you really should do this “*something*.”

Understanding motivation as it's defined here means one thing for certain.

There is really no such thing as a motivational speaker...

Unless it's you talking to you. Only you can motivate you. And that's why *self-motivation* really is the only kind of motivation.

Organizations can often spend so much time on, and so much talk on, “*motivating*” their workers, or members, or salespeople. When what they should be doing is spending less time “de-motivating” them.

Uncommon organizations put considerable time and energy into creating an environment that inspires and attracts talent, not only to want to be a part of that *organization*, but to do whatever they must to prepare for and achieve in that role.

It's not always easy to do, but if you think it matters, or recognize the importance of this preparation, it can become a commitment. And that's a big part of the challenge, recognizing the things that matter. Then following through or committing to them.

Inspiration on the other hand can come from an outside force. It is defined as ...

“the act or power of arousing the mind or emotions, an agent or influence, to give inspiration to.”

That’s my objective as a consultant or speaker or teacher or writer, to be inspirational. To inspire or change how you think about something.

Even to change the way you think about something you already know a lot about.

About what you feel is really possible...

or impossible.

Do you realize the impossible is done everyday, somewhere?

Once upon a time, Light, Flight, The Four-Minute-Mile, and Going to the Moon, were all thought to be impossible. But now— routine.

Think about that one...

What great goal, or objective, or project, or “thing” are you working on?

Something that you may once have thought was impossible. Or maybe someone even told you it couldn’t be done. That means it must be impossible, right?

Go to Disney World and look around.

Pay attention to the individuals you see, and even those you don’t see...

How do the individuals there make The Magic Kingdom seem so magical?

What’s the secret?

Somehow they make the impossible look routine almost daily.

And they make even the routine look fantastic!

There’s a lesson in there somewhere for us all.

Radical improvement, high achievement, top performance and doing the impossible don’t happen just because of an individual’s *“motivation.”*

Motivation can be temporary.

We sometimes have to do things to motivate ourselves

(I don’t feel like doing this, I’m not in the mood right now...)

even when we *say* we really *“want”* to do the thing we’re trying to motivate ourselves toward.

But commitment is a constant.

The commitment to a vision, or cause, or goal, or thing that brings with it a personal motivation to achieve or a satisfaction from our accomplishments.

Commitment can bring about the motivation needed for an individual to accomplish incredible things.

The drive, the pursuit, the desire to do your *“thing.”*

Whatever that goal or cause or thing is for you.

*Commitment Key:
Commitment is stronger than motivation.
Commitment is a gift you give yourself.*

What inspires you?
What have you committed to?
Sadly, it seems that
*most people won't do what it takes to be
great, even when they know what it is...
there is no lack of opportunity for
greatness, only a lack of resolve.*

Over the past 25 years I have pursued the clues of
success and achievement as a student.

Why do some people do so well,
while the majority do not?

What I've found, just as a student who paid attention
and took good notes, is that the pull of greatness or
aspiring to something grand or leaving a legacy is a
"body of work."

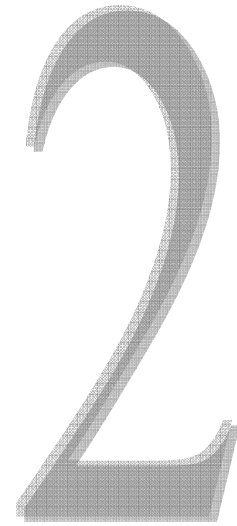
It's done over time, which means it is truly a long-term
goal and requires an on-going determination to not just
arrive at some destination,
but to thrive and grow along the journey.
To be engaged daily in the things that really matter
to you.

The Commitment to

Thinking

"Think and grow rich."

—Napoleon Hill



In *"Think and Grow Rich"* Napoleon Hill penned the
secret of the ages for success in life and business.
The book was first printed in 1937,
and has been re-printed in over 40 editions since.
One of the pages in that book contains this verse:

If you think you're beaten, you are.
If you think you dare not, you don't.
If you'd like to win, but think you can't,
It's almost certain, you won't.

If you think you'll lose, you've lost.
For out of this world we find,
Success begins with a fellow's will—
It's all in the state of mind.

If you think you're outclassed, you are.
You've got to think high to rise.
You've got to be sure of yourself before
You can ever win the prize.

Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger or faster man.
But sooner or later the man who wins
Is the one WHO THINKS HE CAN!

What do you think about?

How do you think about your life or your work or your
ability to succeed?

Or do you really think at all?

A term I heard recently is

“popular thinking.”

Referring to the common or predominant thinking of our
society today. Be on guard for *popular thinking* and
where you could end up as a result.

In 1956 Earl Nightingale produced a recording called
The Strangest Secret. It is, without a doubt,
one of the most powerful messages ever recorded.
Widely regarded as the beginning of the personal
development (*i.e. motivational*) business boom as we
know it today, it is a classic and a thought-provoking
presentation you absolutely must hear someday.
In that recording, Mr. Nightingale shared the story
of a young reporter asking the great doctor
Albert Schweitzer,

“*What is the problem with men today?*”

His answer was profound. The good doctor

pondered the question for a moment and then

replied,

“*The problem with men today is that*

men simply DON'T THINK!”

Here is wisdom.

The *popular* problem with the majority of individuals
(*then and now*)

is that they will allow others to think for them,
or just to tell them what they should think.

Popular thinking.

Tolerant thinking.

Politically-correct thinking.

Not thinking, or even trying.

What separates man from the rest of the species
of the earth is his ability to think.

To decide. What are you thinking about?

What have you decided? Ralph Waldo Emerson once
wrote “*We become what we think about all day long.*”

Commit to thinking.

In one ancient script, the writer described it as
a renewing process for your mind.

Without which, you'd be just like everyone else.
Common and conforming.

Be transformed.

Be renewed, by what goes into your mind
and how you use it.

I will always remember the night of the first ESPY
awards broadcast on ESPN largely because of the
courageous parting performance of Coach Jim Valvano.

Weakened from his battle against cancer, Jimmy V'
climbed onto the platform and delivered one of the most
inspirational messages I've ever witnessed.

"Three things..."

Jimmy began, gripping the podium to stand.

"Three things we should all do every day.

*Laugh, be moved to tears,
and think...deeply.*

Every day, don't miss a day."

What powerful advice for squeezing every drop
out of life.

1. Laugh.
2. Be moved to tears (embrace your emotions).
3. And THINK...DEEPLY!

Take some time to think.

Really think about something, anything.

Because when you only have a limited time left on this
earth (*isn't that all of us*),

these are the things that really matter.

Give it some thought.

*"Readers are plentiful;
thinkers are rare."*

—Harriet Martineau

*Commitment Key: Make time for thinking.
Then capture your thoughts
on paper.*

Part two of this commitment is then to
CAPTURE your thoughts.

Put them on paper.

Your thoughts and ideas captured for today,
and for the future.

Think, read, discuss, debate, think again,
capture thoughts, and put them into action.

*What could your thoughts or your ideas,
become?*

What could they then turn into while impacting
your life or your work?

An idea or thought is just the beginning.

It's not the finished product.

Here is wisdom...

*When faced with new information
or new ideas*

capture now...decide later.

What does that mean?

It means the in the beginning of new information or a new idea, is too soon to decide on what the long-term value might actually be to you, or your life, or your business, or your ministry. How so? Last summer my family and I had the opportunity to see the Broadway play

The Lion King. It was stunning!
The costumes and performances were incredible.

When the idea was first suggested in 1993 to make a Broadway play from an animated movie, it was met with some resistance as you might imagine. In fact one of the gentlemen in that meeting called it *“the worst idea in the world.”*

Three years later, not only did the movie become a Broadway play, but won six of the eleven Tony awards it was nominated for, and in the next 6 years would sell over 15 million TICKETS!
(Priced a ticket to a Broadway play lately?)

Not too bad for THE WORST IDEA IN THE WORLD!
The moral of the story?
Capture now...Decide later.

Everyone seems to be looking for the answers in life.
Actually most individuals seem to be enamored with looking for the shortcut to something...to anything.

But the clues left behind for thousands of years suggest that the answers for you and I are found simply in asking better questions.

Here’s one for you...

*What if a greater measure of success
in life was as simple as reading, listening,
and writing?*

(spaced repetition is a great way to learn, See p. 15)

The good news is this, that if you consider anything important and begin to do it (*really commit to it*), it will eventually become something you get enjoyment and satisfaction and pleasure and RESULTS from.

And it will most certainly transform you in the process.
The more you read, listen, and write...the more you’ll read, listen, and write.

The popular or “common” thinking of the day is that it seems always the fault or result of some event or trend or outside condition (i.e. the day of the week, the economy, my luck, etc.) as to why an individual or an organization isn’t doing better.

When the reality is that any kind of success (*or lack of it*), is an inside job and does not rest in the hands of outside forces...unless of course, you allow it to be so.

As a man thinketh in his heart...so is he.
How true.

“Anybody can do just about anything with himself that he really wants to and makes up his mind to do. We are capable of greater things than we realize.”

—Norman Vincent Peale

One of the popular discussion topics of our day is the economy.

It has become this giant “thing” and taken on almost a life of its own.

Talk of it creates fear and anxiety or cause for some form of celebration. Political and business leaders rise and fall on the popular opinion of it as polls and surveys and news channels tell each of us what we should think or feel.

Surely you’d be doing so much better if only you weren’t suffering in such a “down” economy?

History confirms that in every decade and every economy over the past century there have been incredible feats of radical success in the marketplace!

Incredible accomplishments by individuals, dramatic and inspirational stories of success. All have required commitment to something that is within the grasp of any individual.

Radical Growth is happening everyday... somewhere.

The Economy, while important, is but one element in the success equation of any single organization or individual. However, the clues success has left behind suggest that radical success and high achievement does not typically come from traditional (*read: out-dated*), “the-way-we’ve-always-done-it” kind of thinking.

It requires radical, outside-the-box, uncommon thinking. Imagination, questions, ideas, and the right attitude.

What does your attitude say about you?

It will soon tell anyone around you what you’ve committed to and how you think... or don’t.

While much of our society may have fallen victim to the conventional wisdom (*and I use that word only in making a point, for there is little true wisdom involved in conventional wisdom*) that says let someone else do the thinking for you or tell you what you should think and then all you as an individual will have to do is complain.

That’s common right?

Ever hear someone talk about

“the common thought process?”

What if you should make a list

of all the reasons why you’re not doing better in life or business?

Then use your list to make your case?
Surely that would help your situation right?
Sadly, many people are making *(and using)*
that list right now.

Commitment Key: Are YOU on your list of why you’re not doing better?

Are “you” on your list of why you’re not doing better?
Make a commitment to working harder on you,
it’ll pay off in a big way.

*“A decision is made with the brain.
A commitment is made with the heart.
Therefore, a commitment is much deeper
and more binding than a decision.”*

—Nido Qubein

Michael York *Student & CEO*



Michael York wrote the book on
“Becoming Uncommon!”

He’s been called
*“a unique and entertaining teacher
who makes learning fun,
beats boring training, and helps
individuals and organizations to
become more powerful than the status-quo.”*

As a consultant, he is the “Chief Learning Officer” for many different companies and organizations on thinking differently and creating radical results.

As a businessman, he is the founder and CEO of The Michael York Company, Inc. in Charlotte, North Carolina. Beginning his career in direct sales in 1978, Michael now has over 25 years of sales, marketing, and management experience.

He speaks over 60 times each year to groups across the country, and around the world. On subjects that range from personal development to powerful communication to winning in any economy.

He has been on speaking platforms from the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, to Washington DC, to Walt Disney World... addressing business leaders from cruise ships in the Bahamas, to downtown hotels in Nairobi, Kenya.

In 2002 he launched **COOL \$chool**, and The Michael York Learning Center, Inc. to provide continuing improvement in sales and business training systems... live and on video, for business owners, salespeople and association members.

Michael's columns appear in national publications and online across the country, as well as in his monthly E-Magazine, "***Becoming Uncommon.***"

To subscribe or for more information on Michael York go to

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For speaking inquiries or products, email
leader@michaelyork.com

*"You Can't Change People.
But if you can change their minds,
change the way they think;
People will change themselves."*

—Michael York

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