

Master the Forces that Shape Success / How to Win over Losing,  
Bad Habits, Apathy, Mood Swings and Negativity.

## Eden or Nothing by Al Lewis

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### Welcome.

I must begin by saying that you may have run across this subject within another of my writings. In spite of that I feel it merits an expanded standalone place within the Real Estate Fellowship Library.

### Winners and Losers.

The following subject may at first seem a bit odd; maybe, even, rude or objectionable because it is a discussion about winners and losers.

I used to be dead set against using phrases like winners or losers when referring to people I might meet or see here and there, believing we are all equal in the eyes of God, all endowed with certain inalienable rights, etc. and that it was just not polite to refer to one person as a winner and another as a loser.

But I have since gained knowledge relative to the subject that I want to share openly with you that might impact your success significantly.

I have come to learn the strangest thing, that it is the same set of attitudes that lead to addictions of one type or another – we might call it addictive behavior – that

prevents many of us from consistently winning derived from a psychological phenomenon known as Infantile Grandiosity.

Robert Bly in *Iron John* tells a story that takes place in pre-industrial Africa in which a father takes his boy hunting. Having killed a small rat early in the day, the father asks his son to keep it. The son, thinking it was nothing, tired of carrying it as the day wore on and tossed it aside.

No more game comes along that day and at dusk the father asks the boy for the rat so they can cook it and have something to eat. The boy tells the father, "I threw it away."

Upon hearing that the father, without hesitation, grabbed a club and hit his son on the head knocking him unconscious. He then left, leaving the boy lying where he fell.

According to Bly, almost every man and woman alike can remember that blow however given or received. The psychological wound, as well, is remembered for years and for some, a lifetime.

For men, there are other blows. Some come from the mother, "You are very frail. You shouldn't

play with those boys." "How could you kill such a beautiful little bird?" "If you don't stop that, I'll send you to a foster home. See how you like that!" "You're too big for your britches." "You're acting just like your father." "You'll wind up in prison some day."

The father (in the African story) gives his son a vivid and unforgettable blow which has the hint of death in it. Mothers, on the other hand, though good intentioned sometimes give their sons a baptism of shame.

For boys and girls alike, corporal punishment, beatings, slaps and verbal batterings are blows that lacerate self-esteem, puncture our sense of grandeur, pollute enthusiasm, poison and desolate confidence, give the soul black-and-blue marks that undermine and degrade the self-image.

*These wounds come to us whether we honor our parents or not, whether we are good or bad and, most importantly, whether our parents are good or bad. We all get them here or there at sometime or another.*

Most of them we can describe as wounds to our "Grandiosity."

When we are tiny, psychologists

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say we have the feeling that we are God. Our kingly life in the womb pointed to some such possibility and if anyone, once we are out, tries to tell us we are not God, we don't hear it.

This early sense of our Godliness is called Infantile Grandiosity.

As adolescents we still have enough infantile grandiosity to imagine we can decide whether the rat is big enough to keep or not. Then, when our father hits us with a club and leaves us lying on the ground we find our condition wounded, on the ground, difficult to reconcile with our fantasy of princehood.

All wounds mentioned, those real and those verbal, threaten our princehood and they don't all come from our parents.

Growing up we hear, "Who do you think you are?" One boy is made fun of for being too thin, one girl for being too fat; one has a stutter, one a limp; one is too shy; another not athletic, always picked last; one can't dance or has a bad complexion; another has big ears or a birthmark or is dumb.

**When these abuses occur the child on the receiving end either takes a grandiose road (the high road) or a depressed road (the low road) in reaction to them.**

If we, individually, have taken the grandiose road, we climb up above the wound and the shame. Perhaps we prove our self by getting good grades or by becoming a good athlete, stronger than all others, or we become the one in

the family whose always cheerful; we become a sort of doctor of our own suffering; we take care of others, become a leader, a winner.

If we, individually, have taken the depressed road, we live inside the wounds, many as there are, and the shame and carry it with us every unrelenting day, day-in and day-out decade after decade sometimes until death do us part. We accept and play the role of a victim: one who has been victimized and can't forget it, and one who will not let others forget it as well. The victim or loser is as imposing a person as the winner.

**These, by the way, are just labels for behavior, not indicators of real self-worth or value so, with that in mind, please try not to be praised or offended by either.**

The victim wears the crown of it's-not-my-fault victimhood, becomes a prince or princess in an opposite way. They opt-out of winning because they, winning and losing, can't occupy the same space.

Important to this discussion is openness to a realization that each of us takes both of these roads at one time or another. It is not possible to get to where you want to go without traveling both high- and low-roads here or there. We may use one on weekends and holidays and the other on weekdays as it suits us, but one will dominate.

Once I learned this and got over the "we're all equal in the eyes of God" bit, it became easy to identify the high-rovers and the low-

rovers, the winners and the losers. You can tell them by the way they dress, the way they talk, by the goals they set, by the schedules they create and keep, by their punctuality, their preparation, orderliness, cleanliness, etc.

The high-rovers want to participate with and within the order of things. I'm not saying they are not creative and willing to pursue change when change is needed, but I am saying they don't fight the system or order of things and agitate the flow of business one way or another to create blocks like the low-rovers do.

High-rovers or winners, generally, create the environment within which they become the prince or princess of their own behavior.

Low-rovers or losers do the same. They also, generally, create the environment within which they become the victim of their behavior.

We can rise above the shame of the wounds that shatter our Infantile Grandiosity or we can sink down into the shamed child, become him or her, be no one else through adulthood and live in our secret unworthiness forever.

As I have indicated, there is pleasure in being a low-roller by becoming a victim, where nothing less than success is our fault; or by becoming an addict, the ultimate victimization, by giving up control of who we are or what we are or what we can be to something else.

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### **Eden or Nothing.**

Victims, addicts or persons with addictive behavior tend to be absolutists: it's all-or-nothing with them.

Their principal flaw is an inability to cope with a world that refuses to comply with their infantile picture of order or perfection toward which we basically all aspire.

For a victim or low-roader it's Eden or nothing.

Non-victim or non-addictive personalities contain the requisite pragmatism to negotiate the inconsistencies of an imperfect world. To put it another way, they possess a capacity for middling their convictions.

When a non-victim or high-roader personality is harmed whether physically, psychically, materially or morally he or she seeks closure by settling the matter one way or another, even at their expense.

The victim or low-roader if harmed will demand nothing less than absolute justice; and since absolutes and justice are ever elusive in this world, their demands pile up unsatisfied to the point where the only escape is to escape completely by opting-out, by avoidance, by quitting: it's Eden or Nothing.

Some real estate agents are winners, not necessarily because they are better at what they do than others, but almost solely because they possess a capacity for middling their convictions.

Some real estate agents are losers, not necessarily because they are worse at what they do than others, but almost solely because they demand Eden or nothing. Basically, they quit when things don't go the way they think they should.

Near the opening of this dialogue I said that we each at times take the high-road and each at times take the low-road though we use one on weekends and holidays and the other, maybe, on weekdays as it suits us.

*This indicates that we are in charge of our options.*

It is up to us to decide whether we want to be the disappointed all-or-nothing child-victim in adulthood, a loser, or a winner by accepting disappointment, rejection, setbacks and loss as matter-of-fact business activities. It's up to us which road we take.

Sometimes, I have learned, we take the low-road merely because of a mood we may be in. When we are in a great mood, we take the high-road, when we are in a low mood we take the low-road.

Obvious as it may seem, it took me almost twenty-five years of study to get it.

Every now and then a new associate will join my company all excited about their plans; they set goals, organize their tools and then disappear for 90 to 180 days before resurfacing.

Then, after resurfacing, they do the same thing again; they visit to share their new plans with me, set

new goals, organize their tools and then to my surprise, disappear again. They opt-out when things get tough, take the low-road but blame the experience on outside factors out of their control. Life, it seems, just keeps interfering with their getting to where they want to go in real estate but it's not their fault.

*Mood swings, known as mood disorders, are experienced by one out-of-five Americans at all times; and they move among us from person to person like thieves in the night stealing our strength and motivation.*

The term "mood" in this context refers to a condition of prolonged emotion consisting of either elation or depression of varying degrees.

Mood swings are a combination of manic and depressive episodes, with depression being the more prominent. It is equally common among men and women.

In the manic episode, the predominant mood is one of excessive elation. The person is likely to have extremely grandiose ideas about his or her abilities and be hyperactive. In the depressive episode, the predominant mood is depression or a pervasive loss of interest or enjoyment in life's activities.

You might be asking about this time how all of this relates to listing and selling real estate?

### **The Bottom Line.**

If you cannot stay on track, if you start and stop, give-up, quit, you

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will be unfairly judged a loser by your family and peers and you cannot earn a consistent income or develop a real career.

I am dedicated to liberating all persons on whom I have any influence from this cycle and here's how I will do it.

First, by getting your agreement that we are all creatures of habit and responsibility.

Habits are nothing more than activities done the same ways day-in and day-out; and responsibilities represent things we have to do whether we want to do them or not.

Even when depressed we get up on the same side of the bed everyday. Even when depressed we put our socks and shoes on the same way. Even when depressed we eat with our right or left hand the same way everyday. These things and a thousand others can be done differently but they are not, even when we are depressed.

Depressed persons with 9 to 5 jobs are generally responsible enough get to work on time, everyday. They have to because they do not have the freedom not to, else they would lose their jobs. They then hang around until quitting time, again, because they do not have the freedom not to. Keeping time is a responsibility that "Goeswith" the job.

Freedom or lack of it, it seems, is an essential motivator, even of a depressed person.

As self employed entrepreneurs, however, we have the "Freedom"

not to perform if we don't feel up to it and generally don't when in a low mood and, then, blame our mood on something out of our control.

The key to overcoming this, I have found, whether in a high-mood or a low-mood is to let our habits do the work for us because one habit follows another.

The proof of the matter is this: first thing every morning you get out of bed this way or that; then you take care of personal hygiene this way or that; then you eat or drink this way or that; then you dress this way or that. These are activities that rarely change.

***If you dedicate yourself to a study of your habits and include within the order of events activities related to your career for which you are responsible, you will find yourself succeeding year round, whether low-moods come and go or not.***

Habits can control our behavior in spite of our moods.

If this cure sounds a little too simplistic or too good to be true, well, it is. Even well organized schedules with habitual exercises written in, 1,2,3... this's and that's can sit on the desk undone.

Having the freedom to choose "not to do" a thing seems to be stronger than, even, habits but there is one more trick that will do the job: an appointment.

An appointment is, technically, an arrangement to meet someone or be somewhere at a set time.

When you make an appointment you voluntarily give up freedom

over that time period of your life and, as I have indicated, freedom or the lack of it, it seems, is an essential motivator, even of a person in a low mood.

For some strange reason we will do the most God-awful things on time because of an appointment: we will go to the dentist on time; we will show up for a tax audit on time; we will go to traffic school on time; we show up for license examinations on time; we show up for sales meetings on time; we meet our parole officer on time (some of us).

And, of course, there are a thousand terrific things we do on time as well for the sake of an appointment; for example, we get married on time.

There seems to be a glitch in our programming. Whether we, generally, are high-roaders or low-roaders, winners or losers, an appointment seems to have the power to interrupt the normal flow of things: our habits.

Imagine you have an appointment to pick up a check for \$100,000 (let's think big) made out to you tomorrow at 1:00 in the afternoon at a specific place somewhere in Los Angeles.

If you are more than five minutes early or more than five minutes late your check will be torn up, but if you show up on time, it's yours.

Now, irrespective of the mood you may find yourself in tomorrow afternoon about 1:00, what time will you likely show up for the check?

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I'd say, just about 1:00 exactly.

**Appointments rule our lives. Therefore, the making-of and management-of appointments is an essential key to our success.**

To take advantage of this “glitch” in our programming it is essential that you schedule appointments with real live persons when planning a business development schedule.

I could care less what your lifestyle is, what habits you have, what moods beset you, whether you are a low-roader or a high-roader but relative to the listing and sale of real estate if you allow me any influence over you let it be this principle of success.

Try writing-in this appointment on your schedule for, say, next Tuesday:

**1:00 Sharp: Meet John at 123 N. Elm Street in Los Angeles. Prospect for leads to listings together. List real estate should an opportunity arise.**

The important elements of this appointment are the time, the person you are meeting (a friend or colleague), the place and the activity.

It, also, is important that you do not pick a random location like the “N. Elm Street neighborhood” to meet John, but an actual place that you have seen with your own eyes. Be specific.

Then, next Tuesday, irrespective of the mood you may find yourself in or excuse providing activities that arise, see if you are not driven, motivated, to show up on

time at Elm Street for your appointment with John.

This appointment “Can” interrupt whatever else is going on in your day and irrespective of any mood you may find your self in lead you to meet with John at the appointed time.

Later, of course, you will do this alone.

**There are three basic things that separate the winners from the losers in real estate: the winners, generally, are persons that middle their convictions; persons that manage their habits; and persons that make and keep appointments with destiny (keep a schedule).**

Little else matters.

#### **In Closing.**

No amount of training or preparation will account for much if you don't actually go out and do the work required of success.

It's often said that 20% of the people in real estate make 80% of the money, but after managing various staffs at different times in the market for four-decades I know that this is not true. Actually, about 3% of the people make 97% of the money. They are the winners we aspire to be.

Most agents just won't do the work however good the reasons are for doing it. Some feel a sense of humiliation derived from the humble experience of asking for business and, of course, fear rejection, they still don't want to be picked last. They feel foolish or needy or weak or vulnerable. Whatever the reasons, they just won't do the work.

But among those that feel those things and want to quit or don't try, they just don't get it: those are the very same feelings that all winners feel themselves while doing the things that bring them success. They shake and stutter, and fumble the ball too.

Self introspection and understanding are, as usual, the keys to change and success relative to the handling of these types of feelings.

Please write the following statement down on a big card and stick it up somewhere to be seen so that you will see it and read it every now and then.

**“Only a Nobody, Can Be a Somebody!”**

Generally speaking, persons with high self-esteem, or persons obsessed with the desire for high self-esteem will go to any lengths to avoid humiliation of any kind including activities that may make them feel or look foolish, or needy, or weak, or inexperienced, or vulnerable, or exposed, or whatever. To them these feelings are signs of weakness that damage their self-image.

They will rarely knock on doors for leads to listings because the mere act of knocking on doors makes them feel these things.

Self-esteem or the pursuit of it, however, is not all it's cracked up to be. It is a form of self-absorption not based on love, but on being better than someone else. The person in pursuit of self-esteem must separate themselves from the lot.

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In their minds, what makes them different is what makes them better: American, Jewish, Christian, Hispanic, Black, Asian, rich, intellectual, conservative, liberal, attractive, handsome, muscular, thin or whatever.

The rationalizing goes something like this: "Normal run of the mill people are a sort of contemptuous mob. I would be in that mob were it not for my looks, my professionalism (my license status), race, religion, trendiness (clothes and car), causeiness, wealthiness (image of success), holiness, whatever it is that separates me from the masses."

When one tries to prove his or her "identity" or "self-esteem" through distinctive separation they are on insecure ground and will inevitably suffer anxiety over the risk of loss of that identity. They will do nothing to risk it. That's why they will not knock on doors.

Is there even a small chance that you could be affected by this? If so, here's how you can overcome it.

**Just take the "High Road" and pursue the "Heroic" view of life.**

Today, heroic action is not a matter of conquering new lands or of slaying dragons. The heroic life awaits all who are ready to take up the challenge of making this world the best it can be.

That which says YES to life, we call the heroic view of life. That which ducks the question, we call the anti-heroic view of life. YES to life is an affirmation of love

coming from inside out that completely embraces all human life exactly as it is.

YES understands that death, decay and destruction are as much a part of life as birth, growth and regeneration. Life is full of pairs of opposites. Heroic love transcends the opposites in its embrace of them, it embraces human life exactly as it is without getting hung-up on judgment: you, me, them.

The modern hero disdains separation. The hero feels deeply that he or she is exactly the same as everybody else. From that perspective he or she doesn't need self-esteem, but attempts to heal others: their minds with high ideals, their emotions with loving feelings, their bodies with nourishment and touch, their needs with service (hmm, back to real estate).

The hero is not in pursuit of self-esteem at the expense-of or separation-from others, but in the service of others.

Self-esteem? It's just not all it's cracked up to be. Only a nobody can be a somebody. That's the high road.

Here's to the winners!

What are you doing next Tuesday or Wednesday or Thursday at 2:00 or 4:00 or 6:00 in the afternoon that will get you to where you want to go in real estate, repeated the week after, the week after that, and again and again for maybe the next one or two years?

It is by creating and keeping

schedules chock full of goal-achieving vs. stress-relieving activities that you will get what you want out of real estate.

Real estate, though thought of as a job is not really a job at all, it is an activity. Specific activities get specific results.

It doesn't matter if you work 10-to-20 hours a week or 20-to-40 or 40-to-80, what matters is what you do when you work.

When you work!

The only real difference between the winners in real estate and all others are the schedules for doing the work they create and keep.

To morph your experience in real estate into your being a top producing listing or sales agent, one of the top 3%, requires nothing more than that: creating and keeping schedules for doing the work irrespective of the conditions or circumstances or feelings that try to interfere with your doing it.

Eden or nothing?, forget it. It is by and/or through organized chaos that the things you want to happen, happen.

**Be courageous.**



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