

Developing Personal Leadership Philosophy

Lesson Objective: Discover strategies to use in the development of your personal philosophy.

Desired Learning Outcomes (DLO):

1. Explore the purpose and importance of realizing your personal philosophy.
2. Begin working to develop and document your philosophy.
3. Explain the importance of a personal philosophy for future leaders.

Scheduled Lesson Time: 30 minutes

Introduction *“Values are like fingerprints. Nobody’s are the same, but you leave ’em all over everything you do” -Elvis Presley “Your personal philosophy is your greatest determining factor in how your life works out.” -Jim Rohn*

What is your strategy for living?

Developing a personal philosophy can be a deeply rewarding life experience. A personal philosophy is a framework that helps you understand who you are and make sense of your life.

It is your thoughts, beliefs, concepts, and attitudes about everything. It is your approach to leading your life. It can be as simple as a series of phrases written by you which effectively summarize your values, goals, habits, and the lengths you’ll go to realize them. Look for those few things that make the most difference and to spend most of my time doing those things.

A leader in the field of personal development was Jim Rohn. Born to an Idaho farming family in the mid-1900s, Jim was ingrained with a work ethic that served him well throughout his life. Jim focused on the fundamentals of human behavior that most affect personal and business performance. His is the standard to which those who seek to teach and inspire others are compared. He possessed the unique ability to bring extraordinary insights to ordinary principles and events, and the combination of his substance and style still captures the imagination of those who hear or read his words.

Rohn's tips for developing your personal philosophy are:

1. Set your sail.

The major difference isn't circumstance; it's the set of the sail, or the way we think—it's what we do after we've set our sails and the wind decides to change direction. When the winds change, we must change. We have to struggle to our feet and reset the sail in a manner that will steer us in the direction of our own deliberate choice. The set of the sail, or how we think and how we respond, has a far greater capacity to destroy our lives than any challenges we face. How quickly we respond to adversity is far more important than the adversity itself.

2. Learn from success and failure.

The best way to establish a new and powerful personal philosophy is to objectively review the conclusions you've drawn about life. Any conclusion you've drawn that isn't working for you could be working against you. The best way to counteract misinformation and wrong data is to input new and accurate information. Gather information from personal experience. If you're doing something wrong, evaluate what you did wrong and change things.

3. Read all you can.

People from all walks of life who've had some of the most incredible experiences have taken the time to write of these experiences so we can be instructed and amend our philosophies.

The contributions of other people enable us to reset our sails based upon their experiences. Books offer treasures of information that can change our lives, fortunes, relationships, health and careers for the better.

4. Keep a journal.

The very act of writing about our lives helps us think more objectively about our actions. Writing tends to slow down the flow of information and gives us time to analyze and ponder the experience. The intense scrutiny of journal writing can enable us to make refinements in our philosophy that are truly life-changing.

5. Observe and listen.

Pay attention during your day, watch what's going on. Surround yourself with people you respect and admire. Find people whose personalities and achievements stimulate, fascinate and inspire you, and then strive to assimilate their best qualities.

This is called the skill of selecting. Don't waste your time on the silly and the shallow.

6. Be disciplined.

Every day is filled with dozens of personal crossroads, moments when we're called upon to make a decision regarding minor as well as major questions.

These decisions chart a path to a future destination. With careful mental preparation, we can make wise choices.

7. Don't neglect.

Neglect is the major reason people don't have what they want. If you don't take care of things in your life, neglect becomes a disease. If you neglect to do good things with your money, you probably neglect to do good things with your time. If you don't know what's going on with your health or your bank account, you could be at risk.

Getting Started

1. First, get a pad of paper and a pen. It's better to write your thoughts down to stay organized and not forget.
2. Think over the goals you've set for yourself. At this point they may be vague or more inclinations than concrete plans but isolate them and bring them to the light of your awareness. Understand what values underly those goals. Why are those the things you want to pursue.
3. Write whatever comes to mind throughout these steps and gradually anneal your initial hunches down to their purest form.
4. When you look at the finished list you should feel some warmth in your chest, you should feel like you've found the words that finally describe your attitude towards the world.
5. You should have essentially a list of what you want and the lengths you're willing to go to get those things you want.
6. The final step is to make a plan for achieving those things.

Keep in Mind

Introspection. A life philosophy cannot be outsourced. Although many major religions package premade philosophies, the work of building a strategy for life is yours alone. Thinking about your beliefs and strategies is the only real way to do that. I recommend journaling or meditation to guide your thinking to come to real solutions.

Level 4 Developing Personal Leadership Philosophy

Student Guide

Seek references. Experience can sculpt your strategy on life. I aim to find as many broad experiences as possible so I can use them as points of reference when developing a life philosophy.

Connect with others. Discuss your philosophy and find the philosophy of other people. I do my best to reserve judgment and simply observe. I've heard completely different philosophies on life from my own and each is a valuable source of new ideas. Don't stop the flow by preaching or judging those with a different worldview.

Be patient. The process of refining a life philosophy will take decades, perhaps my entire life. There are no final answers, just slightly optimized ones.

Additional Readings:

1. Crafting Your Own Personal Leadership Philosophy By Deb Calvert
<http://www.managingamericans.com/BlogFeed/Leadership-Teambuilding/Crafting-Your-Own-Personal-Leadership-Philosophy.htm>
2. How to Develop a Leadership Philosophy? by Jon Mertz
3. 7 Tips for Developing Your Personal Philosophy <https://www.success.com/rohn-7-tips-for-developing-your-personal-philosophy/>
4. 10 Steps to Developing a Meaningful Life Philosophy | Scott H Young
<https://www.scotthyong.com/blog/2007/06/26/10-steps-to-developing-a-meaningful-life-philosophy/>
5. How to Form a Philosophy: 11 Steps (with Pictures)
<https://www.wikihow.com/Form-a-Philosophy>
6. Personal Philosophy and Your Values – Lead Boldly
<https://www.andrewjwalls.com/blog/personal-philosophy/>
7. Developing an Effective Personal Philosophy
<https://www.selfgrowth.com/articles/developing-an-effective-personal-philosophy>
8. How to Develop a Leadership Philosophy that Inspires
<https://www.cleverism.com/leadership-philosophy-guide/>
9. Writing Your Own Philosophy of Life, Examples of Philosophies of Life - Psychological Self-Help <http://webshare.northseattle.edu/fam180/topics/values/valuesandmorals11.htm>