



# Building on the Pillars of Personal Achievement

By  
**InVision Development International**

Family Commitments

Cultural Awareness

Financial Intelligence

Physical Health

Spiritual Values

Social Skills

Mental Development

Personal Beliefs

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## A. Organizational Success Starts with the Individual

We will start this with a simple quote.

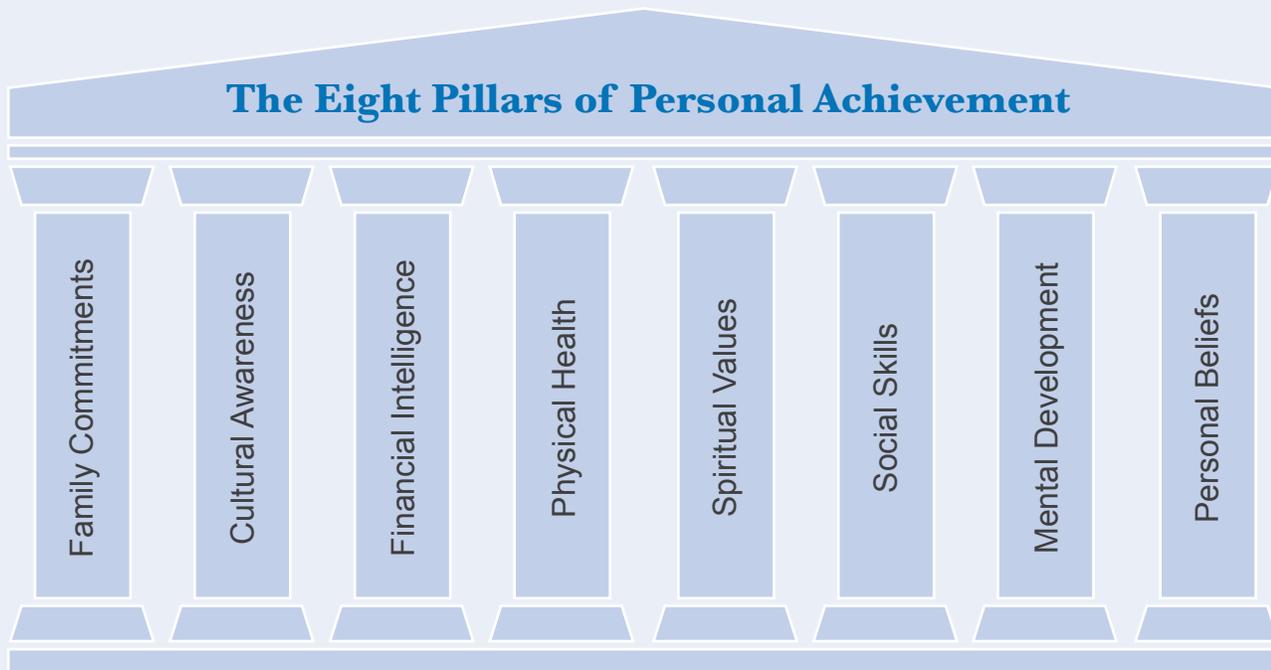
**Think about this:**

*“Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom” — Aristotle*

Your character is influenced greatly by many factors and persons: your parents, family, friends, teachers, upbringing, education, experience, and environment. To understand yourself and how you make choices in your life will help you to make a plan for your future. Each individual is a culmination of different core values and those in turn are refined into what we refer to as the “Pillars of Personal Achievement”.

## B. The Pillars

The Pillars of Personal Achievement encompass eight different areas. Depending on the individual the ranking order of these will vary. As we go through this chapter you will be able to clearly evaluate yourself so you can use the Eight Core Pillars as tools for your personal growth.



## 1. Beginning to Understand the Eight Pillars

We have listed what the Eight Pillars are. Now we begin the process of defining how these pillars impact you.

**Each person has their strengths.** Highly successful people understand their strengths, and more importantly, where their strengths are lacking. Successful people learn how to align their personal opportunities (weaknesses) by collaborating with others with strengths in areas where they are lacking.

### **Try this:**

*If you are a busy person with responsibilities that are not being fully honored, on time or otherwise, do not cut corners and use your Smart-phone to organize the day. Think about hiring a personal assistant to organize your days.*

**Understand that you will never be good at everything.** You are not designed that way. Yet often we find ourselves conditioned to make our weaknesses our strengths. Not only is this impossible, it is futile.

### **Try this:**

*Think of the last time you invested a considerable amount of time working on something you were not good at and did not align with your natural talents. How effective were you at overcoming personal deficiencies?*

**Know your natural talents.** Based on your personality and behaviors, concentrating on an area of your personality, is fundamentally who you are. This way success comes to you, making it easier to develop who you are than retrain yourself in areas that you struggle in. Tapping into your strengths means performing at your personal best and making use of your full potential. It's been proven that excellent performers are rarely well-rounded. Instead they are outstanding in some areas but lack certain other qualities.

### **Try this:**

*Make a list of the things that you have a natural talent for. Review them and review your current situation. Self reflection is so important. Your past is the best indicator of your future.*

*Now make a list of your personal opportunities. Collaborate with others that are talented in these areas.*

**An Added Benefit.** Strengthening your skills through the Eight Pillars allows you to analyze what makes you up. This will develop your leadership potential. The better you understand yourself, the better you will be at understanding and mentoring others; a sign of a great leader.

### **Try this:**

*Compose a list of projects where you have been successful in the past. Now list what will help motivate you to be successful in the future.*

## 2. Transactional Analysis of the Eight Pillars

Throughout this process, you will build on your understanding of yourself and learn to bring out the strengths of others.

### **Think about this:**

*“First keep the peace within yourself, then you can also bring peace to others.” – Thomas à Kempis, 1420*

Take some time to complete each page of questions; one for each Pillar. At the end of each section of questions you will be asked to provide your reflection on your perceived skills in each Pillar. Going forward, we will continue to go deeper into these Pillars and further refine your understanding of self.

### 3. Rating your Perceived Strengths

As you review each statement, please take a moment to give it a value. Use a three-point rating system.

#### **Three-Point Rating System**

*1 = Development Opportunity. This is an area you believe represents a weakness for you.*

*2 = Skilled. While you can develop this statement further you are comfortable with where you are at. This is neither an area of concern or excitement.*

*3 = Proficient. This is an area you define as a strength. You believe your understanding of this statement is very good and you find a great deal of satisfaction or excitement in this area.*

*Tally the scores at the end for your overall pillar rating.*

*We will compare how you rate each pillar at the end.*

#### • Family Commitments

The family unit – is and always will be the basic social organization or unit of any society. Over the years the traditional family structure has changed to reflect changes in our beliefs as a society. Still, this relationship alone, provides stability in a sexual, emotional, intellectual and social ways as no other can.

This statement may seem prejudiced or biased against other forms of social organization but it has proven true over time. When the families are strong, society is strong, and when the family is strong you are more stable. When families are weak societies begin to break down.

#### **Read this:**

*In China the family and family commitments are the basis of both personal and business life. Thousands of years of history and tradition have determined what is done, when it is done, and who is involved. Family has become the major influence in a person's life and determines the opportunities and choices to be made. Because of the policy of one child in a family (two if you are the only child and your spouse is an only child) certain commitments are inferred. In most homes the number one goal is that of marriage and a child. Because of this the commitment that parents have for that child are great. Their primary focus is to provide the best education and opportunity for their child. Then when the child marries they will provide a home for the new couple so that in their later life the children will care for their parents. Grandparents take a very active role in the upbringing of the grandchild and invest a tremendous amount of time and energy in them.*

*Traditionally, this key cultural feature has given Chinese communities a stable foundation for growth; stable economies, a reduction in crime, and an increase in civic responsibility. Yet, as their economy has continued its rapid development, China is also experiencing challenges to the traditional family structure. The influence of a middle class, combined with the efforts of parents, to provide a life they never had for their children has brought new challenges. What can we learn from the changes taking place in developing nations that will help us to understand our own lifestyles?*

Depending on your age, your commitments, and your position within your family, the decisions you make will be influenced in different ways. Review the relationships you have with your family and your attitude towards family and your family members by answering the following key questions:

			Rating
1.	Number of hours a day I spend with family:	Hrs:	
2.	I enjoy spending time with...		
	My immediate family (parents, siblings)		
	Spouse / Significant Other		
	Secondary Family (In-Laws)		
	Relatives (Cousins, Aunts, Uncles)		
3.	Activities we do as a family:		
	1.		
	2.		
	3.		
	4.		
	5.		
4.	I can count on my family to help in times of need		
<b>Total Rating out of 21:</b>			

• **Cultural Awareness**

Cultural awareness begins with sensitivity in understanding that there are differences among cultures. Once we are able to understand that there is a difference we need to learn to place value on diversity.

Developing a culturally competent attitude is an ongoing process. It is important to view all people as unique individuals and realize that their experiences, beliefs, values and language affect their ways of interacting with others and the larger community. Also, be aware, that differences also exist within cultures. It is wrong to assume that a common culture is shared by all members of a racial, linguistic or religious group.

Developing sensitivity and understanding of another ethnic group is important in both our business and personal relationships. Your ability to be aware and sensitive shows that you have qualities of openness and flexibility that people develop in relation to others.

One can never learn everything about another culture. However, there are practical, everyday steps we can take to develop our cultural awareness. Try observing your own cultural awareness by answering the following questions:

Your ability to live in a different culture and to take into consideration the differences that are involved is your cultural intelligence. Whether or not you can jump over the hurdles that you encounter on a daily basis, and how effective you are, determines your score:

		Rating
1.	I make it a point to learn about other cultures.	
2.	I know multiple languages.	
3.	When traveling, I seek to adapt to other cultures.	
4.	I seek to understand before passing judgment.	
5.	I know the impact of cultural differences on business.	
6.	I get excited when experiencing new cultures.	
7.	Countries I have traveled to:	
	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
	4.	
	5.	
<b>Total Rating out of 21:</b>		

• **Financial Intelligence**

Financial Intelligence involves your understanding of finances, money, and managing assets. How we manage our wealth is often directly related to what we learn from our parents. By understanding how you personally value money can directly influence the way you build financial security in the future.

**Try this:**

*Maintaining a firm grasp on your personal finances can help you meet long-term and short-term goals. Here are 3 practical tips that you can live by to help you attain financial stability:*

1. *Live below your means; Save*
2. *Get your credit in check*
3. *Pay down debt; increase your credit rating*

Review some of the important factors in your financial standing by answering the following key questions:

		Rating
1.	I know my credit score.	
2.	I have a monthly budget.	
3.	I save a portion of my income each month.	
4.	I have a \$401K or other retirement plan.	
5.	I have enough money saved to live for _____ months without working.	
6.	I understand the current economic issues and their potential impact.	
7.	I am financially self-sufficient.	
<b>Total Rating out of 21:</b>		

## • Physical Health

Good nutrition is an important part of leading a healthy lifestyle. Combined with physical activity, your diet can help you to reach and maintain a healthy weight, reduce your risk of disease and promote overall health.

Western culture definitely promotes high levels of stress which impact your overall health. As a society we put more focus on our careers and our image; often losing sight of our health.

### **Think about this:**

*“When health is absent, wisdom cannot reveal itself, art cannot become manifest, strength cannot be exerted, wealth is useless, and reason is powerless” – Herophilos*

Review some of the important factors in your health by answering the following key questions:

		Rating
1.	I regularly see the doctor.	
2.	I exercise _____ times a week.	
3.	My diet is considered to be healthy.	
4.	I consume _____ calories per day.	
5.	I eat regularly; _____ times per day.	
6.	List of physical activities I enjoy:	
	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
	4.	
	5.	

7.	List of hereditary diseases I have to be mindful of:	
	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
	4.	
	5.	
<b>Total Rating out of 21:</b>		

**• Spiritual Values**

We spend a lot of time, energy, and effort where our spirituality is concerned and it greatly impacts how we make our day-to-day and life choices.

As we try to achieve our life goals we often find ourselves frustrated. Many people will turn to a higher force or intelligence, like spirituality, to help them cope with their inabilities. This gives us comfort where the obstacles of life weigh us down.

***Think about this:***  
*“The whole purpose of religion is to facilitate love and compassion, patience, tolerance, humility, and forgiveness.” – Tenzin Gyatso, 14th Dalai Lama*

Review some of the important factors in your spirituality by answering the following key questions:

		Rating
1.	I have a clear set of values and beliefs.	
2.	My spiritual beliefs give me purpose.	
3.	I actively participate in my place of worship.	
4.	My spiritual beliefs support my values.	
5.	I am comfortable with sharing my faith.	
6.	I respect different faiths, including ones I don't agree with.	
7.	I live through the values of my faith.	
<b>Total Rating out of 21:</b>		

## • Social Skills

Our abilities at interacting with others vary but we all have to interact with others; at home, at work, at play, or in other situations. This makes up our social skills; they are a necessary component of who we are and how we interact with others.

### **Read this:**

*In one of the recent studies on the health benefits of social relationships, published earlier this year, researchers provided evidence that social ties and increased contact with family and friends are associated with a lower risk of death in young women with breast cancer. Another presented a similar conclusion with respect to surviving heart surgery.*

Review some of the important areas of your social skills by answering the following key questions:

			Rating
1.	Social activities I enjoy doing:		
	1.		
	2.		
	3.		
	4.		
	5.		
2.	I am always making new friends:		
3.	Number of people I consider close friends:	#	
4.	Number of people I consider acquaintances:	#	
5.	Number of people I consider circles of influence:	#	
6.	I participate in _____ social activities per week.		
7.	I share my social activities with my partner.		
<b>Total Rating out of 21:</b>			

## • Mental Development

Our education and mental development continue long after our official education ends. Whether you have a bachelors, masters, or doctorate degree, or were taught on-the-job, it is important to keep yourself challenged mentally as your experience expands.

Review your mental development by answering the following key questions:

		Rating
1.	Books I have read in the past year:	
	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
2.	Level of education I have completed:	
3.	Skills I have taught myself:	
	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
4.	Types of mental activities I enjoy:	
	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
5.	How often I read the news:	
6.	I challenge myself physically with new sports or activities	
7.	New things I have tried or experienced recently:	
	1. Foods:	
	2. Hobbies:	
	3. Languages:	
	4. Music:	
	5. Visual Arts:	
<b>Total Rating out of 21:</b>		

## • Personal Beliefs

Typically the beliefs and traditions that we have been brought up with, those that are instilled by those closest to us, are those that influence us the most. They are beliefs that have strong similarities to spiritual belief, but tend to allow for growth and change, as we go through life and learn from our experiences.

Review your personal beliefs by answering the following key questions:

		Rating
1.	Who had the most influence on your values at an early age?	
	1. Parents:	
	2. Peers:	
	3. Media:	
	4. Religion:	
2.	What were/are your guiding principles during different times in your life?	
	1. Child:	
	2. Teen:	
	3. Young Adult:	
	4. Adult:	
3.	What beliefs have helped you develop as an individual?	
	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
	4.	
4.	What beliefs have you chosen to change as you have developed?	
	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
	4.	
<b>Total Rating out of 21:</b>		

## 4. Pillar Evaluation

There is a reason that we are spending time determining your own strengths and actions, your thoughts and supporting reasons, and values. Leaders are a culmination of all these things and in order to be effective you need to understand not only who you are, but how you got here, and where you are going.

### **Think about this:**

*“Throughout the centuries there were men who took first steps down new roads armed with nothing but their own vision. Their goals differed, but they all had this in common: that the step was first, the road new, the vision unborrowed, and the response they received — hatred. The great creators — the thinkers, the artists, the scientists, the inventors — stood alone against the men of their time. Every great new thought was opposed. Every great new invention was denounced. The first motor was considered foolish. The airplane was considered impossible. The power loom was considered vicious. Anesthesia was considered sinful. But the men of unborrowed vision went ahead. They fought, they suffered and they paid. But they won.” – Ayn Rand*

### Your Ranking of the Eight Pillars

As you look at and evaluate each of these “eight pillars” start by prioritizing them. You can use the scores from your answers to guide you.

Personal Achievement Pillar		Rating
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

## A Clear Vision

We need to have a clear vision of where we are going. How we will get there. Who will be going with us. We often find ourselves as leading a group in business and apart from going through the motions of what we think is expected of us daily. Many of our actions are reactive in nature.

### **Think about this:**

*“Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakens.” – Carl Jung*

### Your Growth through the Eight Pillars

Now add one activity or action you do that demonstrates how each Pillar supports your growth.

Personal Achievement Pillar		Action
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

## Know your Direction

If you and those around you are unsure of the direction you are going you will have the ability to inspire those that choose to follow you.

### **Think about this:**

*“You have brains in your head. You have. You can steer yourself any direction you choose.” – Dr. Seuss*

Now that we have looked at the “eight pillars” of Personal Achievement we are going to ask you and your accountability partner to rate yourself in the Pillars.

Please give an honest rating. (If your accountability partner feels unsure of your ability in certain areas, ask them to leave that Pillar rating blank.

In each area give a rating of 1-10 (10 being the highest)

Pillar	Pillar Ranking Rank 1-8	Personal Rating Rank 1-10	Partner Rating Rank 1-10
Family Commitments			
Cultural Awareness			
Financial Intelligence			
Physical Health			
Spiritual Values			
Social Skills			
Mental Development			
Personal Beliefs			

## C. Achieving Balance Where None Exists

This section will help you to focus on your strengths. Many individuals do not fully comprehend the emotional and psychological power that focusing on strengths brings.

### **Read this:**

*Ms. Cha's story was published in the New York Times.*

*Most of us take for granted the fact that we have a driver's license. This story is about a woman in South Korea who wanted a driver's license so bad, that she had to retake the written drivers test 949 times! Not only did she study voraciously (and receive tutoring), she had to get up at 4am to take three different buses to get there, and it cost her \$5 every time she took the test! She invested many years of her life but eventually she persevered. Clearly her desire, and perhaps a little stubbornness, gave her the strength to overcome all obstacles and fulfill her dream.*

### **1. Focus on Strengths**

In a leadership role it is critical that you not only recognize your own strengths but those of the individuals around you so you can employ them effectively.

Many times we find ourselves in difficult situations: pertaining to ourselves, an executive team or an entire company. We do not always have control over certain issues. In order to expand or enhance our ability to resolve these issues, we need to isolate, understand, optimize and develop our corresponding skill areas.

#### **Your Strengths**

What are things that you consider your strengths?

Who are those around you and what strengths do they exhibit?

How might you more effectively utilize the people and strengths that you listed?


## 2. 10 Things Successful Leaders Do

- 1. Leaders speak their truth.** In business today we frequently 'swallow our truth'. Authentic leaders are different and consistently talk truth. They would never betray themselves by using words that are not aligned with who they are. This does not give anyone a license to say things that are hurtful to people. Speaking truth is simply about being clear, being honest, and being authentic.
- 2. Personal mission.** Business is about people. Leadership is about people. The best leaders wear their hearts on their sleeves and are not afraid to show their vulnerability. They genuinely care about other people and spend their days developing the people around them.
- 3. Leaders have rich moral fiber.** Who you are speaks far more loudly than anything you could ever say. Strength of character is true power. Authentic leaders work on their character. They are aligned with their core values, which include Family, Growth and Honor. In doing so, people trust, respect, and listen to them.
- 4. Leaders are courageous.** It takes a lot of courage to be a visionary. It takes strength to let go of the past. We live in a world where so many people walk the path of least resistance. Authentic leadership is all about taking the road less travelled; doing, not what is easy, but what is right.
- 5. Leaders build teams and create communities.** Success comes easiest when we work together and maximize our talents through our teamwork and community. This is especially important in these times where community is sought through the connections we make in the workplace. Authentic leaders create workplaces that foster human linkages.
- 6. Leaders deepen themselves.** The job of the leader is to go deep. Authentic leaders know themselves intimately. They are always learning. They nurture a strong self-relationship. They know their weaknesses and play to their strengths.
- 7. Leaders are creators.** Einstein said that, "Imagination is more important than knowledge." It is from our imaginations that great things are born. Authentic leaders dare to dream impossible dreams. They are proactive and create new possibilities. Creativity leads us to better products, better services and better workplaces.
- 8. Leaders care for themselves.** Taking care of your physical dimension is a sign of self-respect. You cannot do great things at work if you do not feel good. Authentic leaders eat well, exercise and care for their bodies.
- 9. Leaders commit to excellence rather than perfection.** No human being is perfect. Every single one of us is a work in progress. Authentic leaders commit themselves to excellence in everything that they do. They are constantly pushing the envelope and raising their standards. But they know when to say "When". They do not seek perfection and have the wisdom to know the difference.
- 10. Leaders leave a legacy.** Success is wonderful but significance is even better. As a leader you are made to contribute and to leave a mark on the people around you.





## Chapter Summary:

In Chapter One we have focused on the Foundations for Leadership and the importance of establishing a Vision for your Organization.

### Your Personal Roadmap

Summarize your personal priorities in two to three sentences.


### What you Have Learned

Briefly outline what you need to do to grow personally.


### Your Personal Mission Statement

What is your personal mission statement? Begin defining your purpose.

*"I live to serve others by..."*
