

Clearly Define the Person You Want to Be



Who exactly do you want to be? What kind of person do you want to be? What are your personal ideals? Whom do you admire? What are their special traits that you would make your own?

It's time to stop being vague. If you wish to be an extraordinary person, if you wish to be wise, then you should explicitly identify the kind of person you aspire to become. If you have a daybook, write down who you're trying to be, so that you can refer to this self-definition. Precisely describe the demeanor you want to adopt so that you may preserve it when you are by yourself or with other people.

Speak Only with Good Purpose



So much attention is given to the moral importance of our deeds and their effects. Those who seek to live the higher life also come to understand the oft-ignored moral power of our words.

One of the clearest marks of the moral life is right speech. Perfecting our speech is one of the keystones of an authentic spiritual program.

First and foremost, think *before* you speak to make sure you are speaking with good purpose. Glib talk disrespects others. Breezy self-disclosure disrespects yourself. So many people feel compelled to give voice to any passing feeling, thought, or impression they have. They randomly dump the contents of their minds without regard to the consequences. This is practically and morally dangerous. If we babble about every idea that occurs to us—big and small—we can easily fritter away in the trivial currents of mindless talk ideas that have true merit. Unchecked speech is like a vehicle wildly lurching out of control and destined for a ditch.

If need be, be mostly silent or speak sparingly. Speech itself is neither good nor evil, but it is so commonly used carelessly that you need to be on your guard. Frivolous talk is hurtful talk; besides, it is unbecoming to be a chatterbox.

Enter into discussions when social or professional occasion calls for it, but be cautious that the spirit and intent of the discussion and its content