



Getting Unstuck

EXPERIENCE THE JOY OF FINISHING STRONG

LESSONS AND SKILLS

If you are motivated to change some aspect of your life, the lessons and skills in this book offer perspectives, lessons and skills to help you move your life from being stuck to getting unstuck.

Visit www.gettingunstuckbook.com to learn more about lessons and skills.
www.estherbleuel.com/book

Essential Life Lesson One

WE CAN'T ALWAYS BELIEVE WHAT PEOPLE SAY, BUT WE WILL ALWAYS BELIEVE WHAT THEY DO.

It's much easier to speak than to take action. Actions speak louder than words. Promised actions require commitment; they either happen or they don't. Matching words and actions form the basis of trust. Talk is cheap; truth is harder.

SKILLS

TRUST MYSELF

- I must keep my commitments to earn my own trust.
- I must tell the truth to myself and others.
- Have the courage to know what I know.
- Make things right when I am wrong.
- Earn my own self-respect.

TRUST OTHERS

- Trust is earned, one decision, one action at a time, over time.
- Respect for boundaries is essential to building trust.
- Trustworthiness and credibility must be demonstrated over time.
- Accountability, apology, and making amends are essential to earning trust.

Essential Life Lesson Two

ALL WE CAN DO IS ALL WE CAN DO WITHIN OUR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

There are no guarantees about how things will work out. It's important to be realistic about whether we have the ability, authority, or skills to effect change. We can only impact the people with whom we interact and the circumstances in which we engage. We can't control or change another person.

SKILLS

EXERCISE SELF-CONTROL

- The only person I can control is myself.
- I may speak only for myself.
- Start with the end in mind; commit to a specific outcome.
- Do the right thing for the right reason.

HAVE PERSPECTIVE

- I gain empathy when I imagine "standing" in another person's shoes.
- Individual perspectives may be acknowledged and understood, not judged.

Essential Life Lesson Three

IT'S OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO BE IMPORTANT TO OURSELVES

Self-respect is earned, one decision, one action at a time. We have a responsibility to use and share our gifts, skills and talents. When we are grounded, with our proverbial house built on rock instead of shifting sand, we will not be easily distracted by external forces, seduced by shiny objects, or reactive to circumstance. Behave so you will have no regret and realize that mistakes are opportunities to learn.

SKILLS

DEVELOP INDEPENDENCE

Determine what's important to me and why: values, principles, priorities.

Account for my own actions and choices.

Learn from my mistakes; don't suffer for nothing.

Trust myself to know what I know; don't second-guess myself.

EXERCISE SELF-CONTROL

Don't make decisions based solely on emotions, especially fear.

Think before I speak, respond or take action.

Discipline myself so someone else won't have to.

Do the right thing for the right reason.

Essential Life Lesson Four

DELAYED GRATIFICATION IS HAVING THE PATIENCE AND DISCIPLINE TO WAIT AND WORK FOR SOMETHING BETTER LATER ON

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Start with the end in mind. Patience is a critical life skill. Taking baby steps toward something that matters will eventually lead you there. When we identify a meaningful goal or dream and then achieve it through patience discipline, and hard work, we experience priceless satisfaction pride, and self-respect.

SKILLS

AVOID EXCUSES

Don't blame others or rationalize, justify or excuse my behavior.

Take responsibility for my part in a situation.

FOLLOW THROUGH

The only person who can prevent me from achieving something, is me.

Affirm why this outcome is important to me.

My intention may be very different from my commitment.

The best way to confront my resistance is to take action.

Affiliate with positive, supportive people.

Essential Life Lesson Five

DECIPHERING OUR CHILDHOOD IS NOT ABOUT VILIFYING OUR PARENTS. IT'S ABOUT UNDERSTANDING WHY WE ARE THE WAY WE ARE.

It's reasonable to expect parents to keep you safe. Traumatic experiences can be survived, learned from, and released. Our childhood experiences with adults form long-lasting impressions of roles, attitudes and values. During those years, the brain programs itself to support discovery of the world and self in relationship to others. When protected and nurtured, a child feels secure, can learn and thrive. Unfortunately, unhealthy learned attitudes and behaviors can be devastating and have lasting consequences.

SKILLS

LET GO

- YOU can't un-ring a bell or erase a traumatic experience.
- You can learn not to be a prisoner of your emotions and history.
- The experience will not evaporate or disappear with time.
- Deal with a traumatic experience in order to recover, heal and learn.

EARN SELF-RESPECT

- LEarn from and correct behavior and choices that cause regret.
- Don't blame, rationalize, justify, or excuse my bad behavior.
- Keep agreements I make with myself and others.
- Be proud of who I am, even when no one is looking.

FORGIVE ANOTHER PERSON

- Realize that no one is perfect.
- There is rarely anything so bad that it can't be fixed.
- Consider whether I am truly willing to allow the person to recover.

Essential Life Lesson Six

START WITH THE END IN MIND

If you don't where you're going, you certainly won't get there. Many of us get caught up in thinking about how to do something before we decide exactly what we want to have happen and why it's important. If you have direction and focus, you have security and a framework on which to build.

SKILLS

TAKE BABY STEPS

- Any forward progress occurs one step at a time, no matter how small.
- Confidence is earned by taking action.
- Achieving a goal requires consistent focus and incremental actions.
- Don't minimize small steps decisions, or actions.
- Celebrate achievements along the way.

PROBLEM-SOLVE

- Identify specifically, what a successful outcome would look like.
- Identify the core issue of the problem or situation.
- Consider the pros, cons and potential consequences of each option.
- Consider the cost of not solving the problem.
- Clarify my role, responsibility and authority to deal with the problem.

Essential Life Lesson Seven

MISTAKES ARE OKAY

JUST BE SURE TO MAKE NEW MISTAKES

A mistake is something gone wrong accidentally. Mistakes are opportunities to learn. When we do something wrong on purpose, it's not a mistake. Repeated "mistakes" cannot be regarded as mistakes. It's not what happens that matters so much. It's how you handle things and what they mean to you that count.

SKILLS

FORGIVE MYSELF

It's possible to learn and recover from mistakes and bad judgments.

It's essential to be honest and accountable about my behavior.

Don't dwell on a mistake or a bad choice.

REPAIR AND RECOVER

I must take personal responsibility for damage I cause and make it right.

I should be willing to be part of a solution.

Surviving adversity gives me the choice to be strong and learn, or to be crushed.

Essential Life Lesson Eight

WE MUST LEARN OUR OWN LESSONS,

IN OUR OWN TIME, IN OUR OWN WAY

You can change when you are ready and not a moment sooner. Learning is a process, not an event. We may learn by example, either positive or negative, without engaging in that behavior ourselves. However, unless we apply a lesson in our own daily lives, we will not change. A willing, open attitude prepares us to learn how to learn, so we can grow.

SKILLS

LEARN.

Some things I've learned are helpful, some are not.

Be open and curious about new ideas, people and perspectives.

Observe and learn from other's experiences.

REHEARSE DO-OVERS.

A do-over rehearsal helps me re-experience a conversation more successfully, after-the-fact, by reconstructing one that did not work.

In future similar situations, I will know how to handle myself more effectively because I can reference and use my new skills.

Essential Life Lesson Nine

LET OUR YES MEAN YES AND OUR NO MEAN NO

If we agree to something we don't want to do, or don't know how to do, we will regret or resent it. Because "yes" is an agreement – a promise -- it's important to clarify your understanding of what's expected before making a commitment. If you say yes, you have to be nice. If you say yes when you really mean no, you lose credibility and self-respect.

SKILLS

ESTABLISH BOUNDARIES

If I say "yes," I must be nice and follow through without resentment.

Say "yes" to what I can and will do and no to what I can't and won't do.

Act in my own best interest, not at another person's expense.

MANAGE EXPECTATIONS

Understand what I would like to have happen and why it matters to me.

Clarify, collaborate or negotiate to define a mutually beneficial experience.

Essential Life Lesson Ten

KNOWING ABOUT IS NOT THE SAME AS TRULY KNOWING

There are two kinds of knowing, one broad and one deep. The first kind is having a general awareness or cursory familiarity with a topic. The second kind is a deep understanding gained by education, and experience. To truly know something, teach it to another person until he or she understands it. The concept of knowing also applies to personal relationships. People often don't reveal their true feelings or say what they really mean.

SKILLS

HAVE PERSPECTIVE.

Individual perspectives may be acknowledged and understood, not judged.

I gain empathy when I imagine "standing" in another person's shoes.

GAIN WISDOM

Learn from experience, literature and wise individuals.

Reflect upon and apply concepts and lessons learned throughout my life.

Essential Life Lesson Eleven

IT'S NOT WHAT HAPPENS THAT MATTERS SO MUCH, IT'S HOW WE HANDLE THINGS AND WHAT THEY MEAN TO US THAT COUNT

We have little or no control over many things that happen in life. All we can do is manage our own thoughts and behavior. Knowing the difference between what we can control and what we can't is critical to maintaining equilibrium and focus.

Don't allow another person or a situation outside of your control to define you. Our ability to function in reality and to think objectively helps us create a life that's meaningful, fulfilling and joyful.

SKILLS

ADOPT A GOOD ATTITUDE

My thoughts can change my attitude.

Attitudes are contagious: optimistic or pessimistic, positive or negative.

EXERCISE SELF-CONTROL

The only person I can control is myself; I may speak only for myself.

Think before I speak, respond or take action.

Regulate my behavior; no acting out or tantrums.

Essential Life Lesson Twelve

WE WILL NEVER FORGET A PAINFUL EXPERIENCE. BUT WE CAN LEARN NOT TO BE PRISONERS OF OUR EMOTIONS.

You will never forget a horrendous experience. Acknowledge this reality, feel your feelings, do your best to make sense of the experience, learn from it and celebrate that you have survived the trauma. When you have endured enough anger, pain and fear, you may be strong and ready to create a life of joy and meaning. Many resources are available to help. Many proven skills are in this book when you are ready to learn and practice them. Your story can have a strong ending.

SKILLS

HAVE HOPE

Recognize that hope requires an optimistic attitude.

Delay gratification and take baby steps in order to achieve a different outcome.

LET GO

You can't un-ring a bell or erase a traumatic experience.

Ruminating over something I cannot change is not helpful.

It's how I handle things that happen and what they mean to me that count most.

I can learn not to be a prisoner of my emotions or history.

BE RESILIENT

Realize that recovery from an adverse experience or situation is possible.

Never be defined by others or by bad circumstances.

Take baby steps to improve my situation or journey.

Focus on my success and acknowledge my accomplishments.