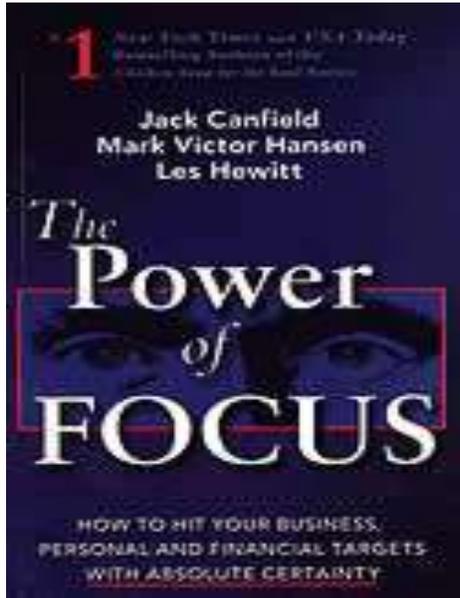


## **The Power of Focus**

Reviewed by: Br. Ahmed Durrani \*



In The Power of Focus, Jack Canfield, Mark Hansen and Les Hewitt discuss practical steps and strategies on how to improve your ability to focus. The book is divided into ten Focus Strategies. Although the

book is intended for a business environment I think that Muslims can take advantage of some of the strategies it offers.

### **Strategy 1 – Habits Determine Your Future**

Have you ever driven home from work and only remembered as you walked in the door that you were supposed to pick something up from the supermarket? That's because you have a habit of driving home everyday and not going to the supermarket. The authors describe successful people as those who have habits that help them achieve that success. People are disorganized because they have habits that make them disorganized. For example, most people are unable to develop financial security because they don't have a habit of depositing 10% of monthly income into a financial investment.

**NO EXECPTIONS POLICY!** The authors state that a person must have a no exceptions policy to develop successful habits. If you want to build a habit of going to the gym three times a week then regardless of what happens you will go to the gym, no exceptions!

### **Strategy 2 – Staying Focused**

To achieve success the authors recommend that a person must invest most of their time every week doing what they do best, and let others do what they do best. They say that when you focus most of your time and energy doing the things you are truly brilliant at, you will eventually reap big rewards. Of course, this requires getting the proper education and training on your specialized activity and practicing it to perfection. For example they mention basketball super star Michael Jordan. Jordan was not responsible for setting up the game, booking the flights or selling tickets. Jordan was only focused on practicing on being a better basketball player. Of course early on in life one may not know what they are truly brilliant at and the authors mention that discovering your personal brilliance may take some time and for some people years.

Further, the book mentions that those who take longer to realize their talents are sometimes too busy wasting time on less fulfilling activities that draw time away from discovering their greatest talents

How do you prioritize your activities? The 4-D solution will help you prioritize your choices:

1. Dump it – learn to say no.
2. Delegate it – Tasks that need to be done and can be done by someone else.
3. Defer it – Some things can genuinely be deferred. Scheduled for a later date.
4. Do it – important projects that need to be started today. Don't make excuses. Do it now!

## Strategy 3 – Look at the Big Picture

The authors claim that those who are successful have a clear picture of what they want to achieve. The clearer that picture is the better are the odds of success. This requires a habit of regularly reflecting on what your big picture is and where you are going.

Setting Goals: Your most important goal must be your own. Further, your goals must be meaningful, specific and measurable, flexible, challenging and exciting, aligned with your values, balanced, and realistic. Your goals should also include making contribution to the community at large.

## Strategy 4 – B-ALERT

**B** – blueprint: people who plan achieve more.

**A** – alert: concentrate on activities that produce the greatest results for you. Don't think about your work when you've planned a joyous family outing and don't think about family issues when you are focusing on finishing your work. After you've completed your task then focus on the next issue.

**L** – learning: some time of your days should be for expanding your knowledge. Some people have earned the equivalent of another university degree by listening to tapes on the way to work.

**E** – exercise: exercise is part of a balanced schedule improves your ability to do more.

**R** – relax: take 30 minutes of undisturbed rest between 1:30 and 3:00 pm.

**T** – thinking: schedule time for reflective thinking helps you stay focused and develop unusual clarity.

## Strategy 5 – Build Excellent Relationships

Suggestions:

- The authors recommend that we avoid toxic people; people who are always negative. Such people will bring you down and destroy your dreams and goals.
- Be open to feedback and especially the feedback of your mentors and role models.
- Find Great Mentors
  1. Identify an area of life you want to improve.
  2. Select candidates for a mentor, usually someone talented in the area you want to improve.
  3. Develop a strategic plan, approach your mentor and work out the details.

## Strategy 6 – Confidence

Resolve the unfinished business in your life. These unfinished issues can drag on and eventually overwhelm you. The authors feels that this problem is sometimes associated with a lack of self-confidence and fear. However, in reality most of these fears only exist in our mind. We can choose to deny our problems, let them hang in limbo or confront the issues head on. The authors recommend stepping into the fear and choose to take the risks.

Six Confidence Building Strategies:

1. Everyday remind yourself of what you did well.
2. Read inspiring biographies and autobiographies
3. Be thankful – there could be someone worse off than you could.
4. Take companions who support you
5. Make short term and simple to achieve goals.
6. Celebrate when you achieve your goals.

## Strategy 7 – Ask for what you want

Clement Stone said, “if there is something to gain and nothing to lose by asking, by all means ask.” Somehow, some people develop a belief system that it's not right to ask for things. Some take this too extreme and feel that it is even inappropriate to ask Allah for what they want. Of course the other extreme should not be taken either, that is to ask for everything and do nothing on your own. However, the authors do raise an important issue. Some things could've have been achieved better if only we had asked.

The authors also suggest some strategies for when you ask. Ask clearly, with confidence, consistently, creatively and sincerely.

## **Strategy 8 – Consistency and Persistency**

The authors states, “you will never achieve big results in your life without consistent and persistent action.” This statement is also congruent with the Hadith of the Prophet (sw) who said, “the best action is that which is consistent, even if it is small.” Consistency means to do something on a regular basis whereas persistency means to do something even in the face of hardship.

## **Strategy 9 – Be decisive**

Some people are in the habit of putting things off until the last moment or even when it’s too late. Procrastination is a major obstacle to achieving what you want and when you want it.

Steps to overcome procrastination:

1. Think: use your reflection time that we discussed earlier.
2. Ask: good questions.
3. Decide: make a firm decision and be honest with that decision.
4. Act: on what you decide. Failing to act will dampen your spirits, ruin your reputation and welter your confidence.

## **Strategy 10 – Living on Purpose**

The authors mention that many people don’t have a clear purpose in life. As a result some of them have become bored, depressed or even in a mid-life crisis.

Three key points to keep our purpose in mind:

1. Align your purpose with your natural abilities.
2. Be determined.
3. Maintain a humble attitude.

This book really helped me be focused on what I wanted to achieve. I recommend that you read this book if you find yourself wondering and loosing focus.

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