

8 Promises You Should Make Every Day

Make a difference--at work, in your personal life, and in the lives of others. Say these vows to yourself daily--and then follow through.

You can be an analytical, data-driven, steely-eyed businessperson all you like, but business is ultimately about people.

That means business is also about emotions: both yours and those of the people you interact with every day.

Want to make a huge difference in your life and in the lives of the people you care about, both professionally and personally?

Say these things to yourself every day--and then vow to follow through on the commitment you make:

I will answer the unasked question.

Maybe they're hesitant. Maybe they're insecure. Maybe they're shy. Whatever the reason, people often ask a different question than the one they really want you to answer.

One employee might ask whether you think he should take a few business classes; what he really wants to know is whether you see him as able to grow in your organization. He hopes you'll say you do and he hopes you'll share the reasons why.

Your husband might ask if you thought the woman at the party was flirting with him; what he really wants to know is if you still think he's flirt-worthy and whether you still find him attractive. He hopes you'll say you do and he'll love when you share the reasons why.

Behind many questions is an unasked question.

Pay attention so you can answer that question, too, because that is the answer the other person doesn't just want, but needs.

I will refuse to wait.

You don't have to wait to be discovered. You don't have to wait for an okay. You don't have to wait for someone else to help you.

You can try to do whatever you want to do. Right now.

You may not succeed. But you don't have to wait.

Don't wait.

I will appreciate the unappreciated.

Some jobs require more effort than skill. Bagging groceries, delivering packages, checking out customers--the tasks are relatively easy. The difference is in the effort.

Do more than say "thanks" to someone who does a thankless job. Smile. Make eye contact. Exchange a kind word.

All around you are people who work hard with little or no recognition. Vow to be the person who recognizes at least one of them every day.

Not only will you give respect, you'll earn the best kind of respect--the respect that comes from making a difference, however fleeting, in another person's life.

I will give latitude instead of direction.

You're in charge. You know what to do. So it's natural to tell your employees what to do and *how* to do it.

In the process you stifle their creativity and discount their skills and experience.

Letting another person decide *how* is the best way to show you respect their abilities and trust their judgment.

In a command and control world, latitude is a breath of freedom and is a gift anyone can give.

I will stop and smell my roses.

You have big plans. You have big goals. You're never satisfied, because satisfaction breeds complacency.

So most of the time you're unhappy because you think more about what you have *not* achieved, have *not* done, and do *not* have.

Take a moment and think about what you *do* have, professionally and especially personally. At this moment you have more than you once ever thought possible.

Sure, always strive for more but always take a moment to realize that all the things you have, especially your relationships, are more important than anything you want to have.

Unlike a want, what you have isn't a hope, a wish, or a dream. What you already have is real.

And it's awesome. And it's yours.

Appreciate it.

I will look below the surface.

Sometimes people make mistakes. Sometimes they piss you off.

When that happens it's natural to assume they didn't listen or didn't care. But often there's a deeper reason. They may feel stifled. They may feel they have no control. They may feel frustrated or marginalized or ignored or not cared for.

If you're in charge, whether at work or at home, you may need to deal with the mistake. But then look past the action for the underlying issues.

Anyone can dole out discipline; vow to provide understanding, empathy, and to help another person deal with the larger issue that resulted in the mistake.

After all, you might have caused the issue.

I will make love a verb.

You love your work. When you're working that feeling shows in everything you say and do.

You love your family. When you're with them does that feeling show in everything you say and do?

Hmm.

Love is a feeling, and feelings are often selfish. Turn your feelings into an action. Actively love the people you love. Show them you love them by words and deeds.

When you make love a verb the people you care about know exactly how you feel. Make sure they do.

I will be myself.

You worry about what other people think. Yet no matter how hard you try, you can't be all things to all people.

But you can be as many things as possible to the people you love.

And you can be the best you.

Be yourself. That is the one thing you can do better than anyone else.