MINDSET & SUCCESS

# Twelve Pillars

by Jim Rohn and Chris Widener

*A stranded driver, a wise caretaker, and the 12 pillars that hold up a rich life - told as a short story.*

## BEST POINTS FROM THE BOOK

**01** **Work harder on yourself than you do on your job.**

Pillar 1, personal development. A job can be taken from you; the person you become cannot. Read, study, and apply what you learn - the only way things change for you is when you change.

**02** **Health is three-dimensional: body, soul, and spirit.**

Pillar 2, total well-being. Let one dimension slide and the whole person wobbles. Make sure the outside of you is a good reflection of the inside of you.

**03** **Relationships are a garden: tend them or lose them.**

Pillar 3, the gift of relationships. Gardens stay alive on three gifts given again and again - time (quality AND quantity), effort, and imagination. Weeds grow for free; gardens do not.

**04** **Write your goals down - and set them for what they will make of you.**

Pillar 4, achieve your goals. Charlie starts Michael on a list of 100 things to do in a lifetime. The deepest reason to set a goal is not the prize; it is the person you must become to reach it.

**05** **Either you run the day, or the day runs you.**

Pillar 5, the proper use of time. Every day holds many opportunities but only one best one. The pain of discipline weighs ounces; the pain of regret weighs tons. Days are expensive - spend each one wisely.

**06** **Choose your people like your life depends on it - it does.**

Pillar 6, surround yourself with the best people. Charlie sorts every relationship into disassociation, limited association, or expanded association. Ask hard questions about every close influence: what is this person doing to me?

**07** **Formal education makes a living. Self-education makes a fortune.**

Pillar 7, be a lifelong learner. Learn three ways: read books, observe successful people, and reflect honestly on your own experience. Most people stop learning when school ends - that gap is the opportunity.

**08** **All of life is sales - and sales is influence.**

Pillar 8. You are always persuading someone: a boss, a customer, your own kids. Influence flows to people seen as talented and virtuous, so be both - know your stuff, talk to plenty of qualified people, and never take the first no.

**09** **Your income seldom grows past the person you are.**

Pillar 9: income seldom exceeds personal development. Profits are better than wages - work full time on your job and part time on your fortune. Grow the person first, and money, chances, and access tend to grow after.

**10** **Communication is two people hunting for common ground - and listening is the bigger half.**

Pillar 10: all communication brings the common ground of understanding. It is not just what you say, but how you say it, when you say it, and whether the other person can receive it. Listening well is not a technique; it is proof that you value the person.

**11** **The world can always use one more great leader - so become one.**

Pillar 11. Leadership is influence: helping people change their thoughts, beliefs, and actions for the better. It rests on integrity and trust, and leaders talk about what could be. Anyone can lead - including you.

**12** **Make a living, or design a life - then leave the life as your legacy.**

Pillar 12, leave a legacy. Charlie delivers this final lesson in a letter Michael reads after Charlie's death. A legacy is more than money left behind; it is a life that teaches - give of yourself, serve, teach, and be patient, loving, and loyal.

## THE BOOK, IN SHORT

The big idea comes wrapped in a story. Michael Jones is 40, a salesman stuck in a flat career with a marriage gone cool and his college dreams long shelved, when his car dies on a country road. He walks to a plantation-style mansion on an estate named Twelve Pillars, owned by the wealthy Mr. Davis. Charlie, the estate's caretaker, gets him back on the road - and over a series of return visits, teaches him the Twelve Pillars of Success behind Mr. Davis's wealth and fulfillment.

The first pillars are personal. Personal development: work harder on yourself than on your job. Total well-being: health is three-dimensional - body, soul, and spirit. Relationships: a garden kept alive with time, effort, and imagination. Goals: write them down - Charlie starts Michael on a list of 100 things to do in a lifetime, and teaches him to set goals for what they will make of him.

The middle pillars run your days, your circle, and your money. Use time on purpose, because discipline weighs ounces and regret weighs tons. Surround yourself with the best people, sorting every influence into disassociation, limited association, or expanded association. Keep learning for life, since formal education makes a living but self-education makes a fortune. Learn to sell,

because all of life is influence, and influence belongs to people of talent and virtue. And accept the money rule that ties it together: income seldom exceeds personal development - profits beat wages, so grow the person and the money follows.

The last pillars zoom out. Communication is two people working together to find the common ground of understanding, and listening matters more than talking. The world can always use one more great leader. And finally, legacy. When Michael returns to learn the twelfth pillar, he learns that Charlie has died of cancer - but Charlie left him a letter with the last lesson: leave a legacy. Do not just make a living; design a life, and live it as an example that keeps teaching people after you are gone.

## DO THIS WEEK

Rate the twelve pillars honestly from 1 to 10 and circle your weakest one. This week, give that pillar one small daily habit - ten pages of reading, a short walk, one call to a friend - and keep it for seven straight days.

*Twelve Pillars by Jim Rohn and Chris Widener, first published 2005. A one-sitting story that teaches Rohn's whole philosophy - a perfect first Rohn book.*