

'Soft skills' is a term relating to an individual's personality traits, social graces, communication skills, personal habits, friendliness, and optimism that characterize relationships with other people. Soft skills complement hard skills, which are the occupational requirements of a job.

Soft skills aren't just important in the obvious positions that deal with clients and customers. They are important for every person in an organization. When the Directors acquire soft skills, better relationships are built between other nonprofit areas resulting in increased productivity.

Developing interpersonal skills affects all of your life; far beyond your career.

- Your relationship with your spouse, children, and friends will deepen.
- You will attract like-minded people into your life.
- You will gain people's respect and admiration.
- Your example will teach others how they can be more successful.
- You will feel that you have more control of your life.

In addition to the long list of ways your life will be enhanced, you will be making this world a better place. The impact a positive example has on people's lives, can never be underestimated both directly and indirectly.

Developing Soft Skills

The time you spend developing your soft skills will never be wasted. Even if you change careers five times, the soft skills you learn today can always be used to set you apart in whatever you do with your life.

I want to challenge each of you to start focusing on your soft skills. Here are some simple ways to get started.

1. Start doing the little things you already know you should do. You know many of the things you should be doing to develop better relationships, increase your productivity, and be more responsible. A simple gesture of kindness is a good start.

2. Become a dedicated observer of others. When you are drawn to someone, ask yourself why. When you begin to trust someone, pinpoint the reasons. If you received excellent service from someone, think about what this person did that impressed you. There is a lot you can learn by watching others.

3. Start living in a state of awareness. Turn off autopilot and start making conscious decisions as you move through your day, especially when interacting with other people. Positive change begins with awareness.

4. Become a student of personal and professional success. If you have a genuine desire to improve your soft skills, start consuming content on the subject. Start by reading Little Things Matter, 100 Ways To Improve Your Life, by Todd Smith. Also, Success

Magazine is a great resource.

5. Be intentional every day. Getting better only comes with effort. While some of the things will come naturally to you, others will require an intentional effort.

The great thing about building your soft skills is that you can acquire them on your own. Regardless of your background, gender or education, developing your soft skills will make you stand out from the crowd in whatever you choose to do.

To advance your life personally or professionally, you must put an emphasis on developing your soft skills.