



Kenny's 8 Count for Successful Living



1. **Practice gratitude.** A partially filled glass of water could be described as half empty or half full. It is certainly both. So it is with your life. There is always both emptiness and fullness. But your level of contentment can vary greatly depending on where you choose to focus your attention. In his book, *The 4:8 Principle*, Tommy Newberry offers a practical to start your day with a focus on the "fullness" of your life. Before you get out of bed each day, ask yourself:
 - What are 5 things I am grateful for right now?
 - What are 5 of my strengths or positive traits?
 - What are 5 of my best achievements so far?
 - Who are the 5 people who love me the most?
 - What 5 things am I looking forward to this week?If you take time to count your blessings, they will almost always outnumber your challenges.

"Give thanks in all circumstances..." 1 Thessalonians 5:18

2. **Live in the present.** So many people have regrets from the past or anxiety over the future. The truth is that we don't change a thing by using our precious thought life on either. What can you do TODAY to build up a relationship, find the job you desire, learn a skill you need, or improve your health? You cannot TAKE ACTION in the past or future, only NOW.

"...Do not worry about tomorrow..." Matthew 6:34

3. **Serve others.** Beyond basic survival needs, the greatest human desire is "to make a difference." When you feel down, discouraged, or downright depressed, the best pick-me-up can be helping someone else--taking a meal to a sick friend; helping someone move; babysitting your friend's child or pet, serving the homeless at a soup kitchen. Serving helps keep things in perspective and provides an opportunity to make a difference EVERY day. The more you serve, the happier you will be.

"...I am among you as one who serves." Luke 22:27

4. **Worry less.** Worry is a nasty habit with no productive outcome. You can either choose to approach life with love or fear. Fear is the basis of worry. If you find yourself in this state, stop and ask, "What is the very worst thing that can happen?" Most of the time, that remote possibility won't cost you your life or limb. The most dreaded outcomes usually only occur in the 4-6 inches between your ears. The best remedy when worries come your way? Practice gratitude (#1 above).

"...Do not worry about your life..." Matthew 6:25

5. **Judge less.** When a speeding driver cuts you off in traffic; your boss lets you take the blame for an oversight on his part; or your spouse yells at you for something beyond your control, judging is hard to resist. But isn't judging just passing blame, responsibility or dissatisfaction with your own life onto someone else? But judging doesn't make you feel better, so why do it? We all battle a hungry heart--what we have in life versus what we feel entitled to. The rude driver thinks he should be able to get to work on time; your boss wants respect and fears losing face; and your spouse is frustrated and needs someone to blame. In those challenging moments, try to muster compassion. You've been there too. It isn't pretty but it is part of being human. Forgive and forget. And when you are completely calm, go and talk to the person who wronged you.

"A critical spirit has a way of boomeranging..." Matthew 7:2 (MSG)

6. **Practice good stewardship.** You get to choose what you do with your time, talents, finances, and physical health. These are all resources within your control. Are you investing or wasting? Building up or tearing down? Creating peace or turmoil? Are you making the best use of what you have been given? Some people operate under the assumption of "he who GETS the most wins." I have come to believe just the opposite: "He who GIVES the most wins." Challenge yourself to keep growing in all these areas. You will learn as you go.

"...You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things..." Matthew 25:21

7. **Don't major in the minors.** It is so easy to get caught up in the "I-can-have-it-all" frenzy of life, but it turns out that money and "stuff" can't buy happiness or love. In the end, isn't what matters most: who you love and who loves you? The most important part of my life is my relationship with God. The Bible outlines the ingredients of the joy-filled life we all desire: showing mercy, practicing justice, committing ourselves in love relationships, serving others, putting others first, and all the other things outlined on these two pages. As I strive to follow in the steps of Jesus, I am confident that I am experiencing the best possible version of life on Earth. I wish that for you too!

"What profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?" Matthew 16:26

8. **Pray more.** Why carry the full weight of your day and life on your shoulders when the God of the universe has made himself available to meet your needs, direct your path, give you courage, go before you, never leave you, and love you all the days of your life? When you open your eyes in the morning, start the conversation. Thank God for being there, for his creation, for your life, for your blessings. Talk to God about where you struggle and ask for help. Keep your conversation going throughout the day. If worry or fear creeps in, talk to the One who made you, knows you and is crazy about you.

"Pray continually" 1 Thessalonians 5:17