

SOUL FOOD



**Change Your Thinking,
Change Your Life**

FRANK SONNENBERG

PRAISE FOR SOUL FOOD

"Reading Frank's teachings is like sitting at the feet of a master. *Soul Food* provides a fantastic opportunity to learn from someone who knows the way – and is generous enough to share it with us."

– **BOB BURG**

Coauthor of *The Go-Giver* and *The Go-Giver Influencer*

"*Soul Food* will help you excel as an extraordinary individual and ethical leader. I wish I had this book long ago. I strongly recommend reading it!"

– **PROFESSOR M.S. RAO, PhD**

Father of "Soft Leadership" and author of over 40 leadership books

"*Soul Food* provides the recipe for a happier, more meaningful life, with better relationships and greater success. These nuggets of relatable, easy-to-digest wisdom will inspire the best in you."

– **MELANIE GREENBERG, PhD**

Clinical psychologist, coach, and author of *The Stress-Proof Brain*

"Frank Sonnenberg serves the world, leading us to perform our best in life and work. *Soul Food* is an outstanding compendium of actionable inspiration that will add value in any setting."

– **JAMES STROCK**

Author of *Serve to Lead*

"If you only have time to read one book this decade, make it *Soul Food*. It is not a book to be read. It is a recipe to be lived."

– **AUGUST TURAK**

Templeton Prize-winning author of *Brother John: A Monk, a Pilgrim and the Purpose of Life*

PRAISE FOR SOUL FOOD

"*Soul Food* is truly a life-changing book. It's filled with incredible wisdom and practical advice that will help you achieve a new level of success and happiness."

– JOHN SPENCE

Named "Among Top 500 Leadership Development Experts in the World" by HR.com

"*Soul Food* promotes nurturing from the inside out. Frank Sonnenberg offers concise and actionable tips to help you think about the most important things in life."

– LARAE QUY

Former counterintelligence FBI agent, author of *Mental Toughness for Women Leaders* and *Secrets of a Strong Mind*

"Frank Sonnenberg has a way of communicating powerful ideas in gentle ways. *Soul Food* provides inspirational lessons that will help you live the life of your dreams. It's a must-read."

– SARAH HINER

President and CEO, Bottom Line Inc. (Publisher of *Bottom Line Personal*)

"When Frank says, 'for what it's worth,' it's your clue to listen up! There's a gem of wisdom that follows this humble phrase. *Soul Food* – Read it. Be inspired. For what it's worth..."

– SHARON TELESKA FEURER

Luxury hospitality consultant and business strategist

"Frank Sonnenberg offers the greatest wisdom and penetrating insights of any author I have ever read. *Soul Food* is his best."

– BOB VANOUREK

Award-winning leadership author and the former CEO of five companies

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CHANGE YOUR LIFE

“

ABILITY DETERMINES
IF YOU CAN;
ATTITUDE DETERMINES
IF YOU WILL.

— FRANK SONNENBERG

GREAT THINGS START WITH GREAT EXPECTATIONS

“YOU GET WHAT YOU EXPECT.”

For years, athletes tried and failed to run a mile in less than four minutes. It was said that doing so would cause significant damage to a runner's health. However, on May 6, 1954, Roger Bannister set out to prove everyone wrong. To everyone's amazement, he broke the four-minute barrier, running the distance in 3:59.4 — breaking a record that had stood for nine years. Bannister taught us a valuable lesson. As part of his training, he set high expectations for himself and relentlessly visualized his success to create certainty in his mind.

It's interesting to note that as soon as Bannister proved a four-minute mile was feasible, it suddenly became possible for many others to achieve the same feat. In fact, even though “sub-four” continues to be a notable time for running the mile, top international runners routinely accomplish this achievement. The bottom line is that when you believe something's possible, it becomes possible.

This is true in all walks of life. For example, expectations are well recognized in medicine, where doctors have known the power of the placebo effect for a long time. The fact is, when people expect a particular outcome, they look for evidence to support their view. This can have a powerful effect on behavior and ultimately, on results.

HOW YOUR EXPECTATIONS BECOME YOUR REALITY

People adjust their behavior based on the way they see the world. Here are 11 ways that expectations can affect your life every day:

If you believe **today's going to be awesome**, you're going to be happier and more productive than if you fear problems lurking around every corner.

If you believe **people are trustworthy**, you're going to manage relationships differently than if you think everyone's out to get you.

If you believe **you can overcome any challenge**, you're going to view obstacles differently than if you feel you're doomed from the start.

If you believe **you're going to be successful**, you're going to view your prospects differently than if you think, "People like me never stand a chance."

If you believe **relationships should be win-win**, you're going to build partnerships differently than if you think everyone's out to get the upper hand.

If you believe **good people finish first**, you're going to behave differently than if you think you have to be ruthless to win.

If you believe **feedback is critical to personal growth**, you're going to receive it differently than if you think feedback means you did something wrong.

If you believe **every successful person encounters failure**, you're going to view mistakes differently than if you think failing makes you a failure.

If you believe **hard work pays off**, you're going to view tough days differently than if you believe your company's trying to take advantage of you.

If you believe **people generally try their best**, you're going to manage people differently than if you think people are generally lazy.

If you believe **life has its ups and downs**, you're going to view bad days differently than if you think you're the only one with problems.

YOU GET WHAT YOU EXPECT

Expectations are everything! If you shoot for the moon, and fall a little short, you'll still end up among the stars. Conversely, some people set the bar so low you can trip over it. The fact is, "I can't" and "I won't" trigger the same results.

When you believe something's possible and you set your sights firmly on the prize, you've taken the first big step in making it a reality. When every part of you believes that the outcome will be positive, something magical happens. Great accomplishments begin with great expectations. You get what you expect. :))

HARD WORK IS GOOD FOR YOUR SOUL

“HARD WORK ISN’T A PUNISHMENT; IT’S A GIFT.”

Work isn’t just about getting a paycheck; hard work builds character, promotes dignity, and gives you control over your life. But some folks don’t see it that way. As Sam Ewing, the professional baseball player, said, “Hard work spotlights the character of people: some turn up their sleeves, some turn up their noses, and some don’t turn up at all.”

Some people will do anything to get out of work. Examples range from those who say a job is “beneath them,” to folks who want to start at the top without paying their dues. Some folks try to get by with sheer personality, while others dodge work by hiding in the corner and then stealing the credit. Additionally, some people request promotions or demand more pay, not because it’s *earned*, but because they *want* it. In all these cases, the common denominator is the same — hard work is not part of the equation. What none of these folks realize is that hard work isn’t a punishment; it’s a gift.

THERE’S NO SUBSTITUTE FOR HARD WORK

On a fundamental basis, an entry-level job provides valuable lessons. It teaches us to show up on time, follow directions, work hard, and get along with others. Here are 12 life lessons that hard work offers:

Expectations. Set the bar high. If you accept mediocrity, you’ll be mediocre.

Courage. Put fear aside. Set stretch goals and leave your comfort zone.

Discipline. Stay focused. Remain strong when days are tough.

Integrity. Build trust. Keep your promises. Live with honor.

Pride. Make yourself proud. Always give 110%. It's the extra 10% that everyone remembers.

Creativity. Don't accept the status quo. Be a problem-solver. Make things better.

Humility. Accept wins with grace and learn from your losses.

Determination. Stare adversity in the eye and stay the course when confronted with overwhelming challenges.

Flexibility. Even the best-laid plans go awry. Be flexible and remain open to new opportunities.

Teamwork. Be a team player. Your colleagues' success is your success.

Personal responsibility. Accept responsibility for your actions. The buck stops with you.

Make a difference. You were hired to add value, not to be a placeholder.

HARD WORK IS GOOD FOR YOUR WALLET AND YOUR SOUL

Hard work builds character, contributes to success, provides a living, and promotes happiness. The converse is also true. When people are rewarded *without making the effort*, it reduces confidence, promotes dependency, and robs individuals of their personal dignity. The fact is, when any part of the human body hasn't exercised properly, it will atrophy. The same is true of the spirit.

While work provides a living, it offers you so much more. Hard work provides a sense of purpose. People don't want a handout. They want to know that they've earned their success, which enables them to have control over their lives. They want to wake up each morning and be excited to get out of bed. They want stimulating work that keeps them on their toes and contributes to their personal and professional growth. This makes their days more rewarding and their experience more valuable. This doesn't happen when folks sit on their duff or have success handed to them on a silver platter. It happens when people know that they've earned their keep. You can achieve anything in life as long as you're willing to work hard and you put your mind to it. Are you up to the job? :)

BEING “ALL TALK” SPEAKS VOLUMES

“IF YOU DON’T THINK TALK IS CHEAP, WE NEED TO
HAVE A HEART-TO-HEART CONVERSATION.”

Call it whatever you want: “All bark and no bite; All sizzle and no steak; All foam and no beer.” The meaning’s still the same — talk is cheap. The fact is, being all talk amounts to nothing more than hollow words.

While some people believe that saying something will make it come true, nothing can be further from the truth. Unfortunately, that doesn’t stop people from behaving this way. They talk about dreams (but never act on them), make promises (but fail to keep them), and spew noble statements about what they stand for (but let’s get real...actions speak louder than words). If you don’t think talk is cheap, we need to have a heart-to-heart conversation.

BEING ALL TALK SPEAKS VOLUMES ABOUT YOU

Here are 10 examples which prove that talking a good game is as phony as a three-dollar bill:

Couch potato. It’s easy to talk about what you’re planning to do, but if you want things to happen, put up or shut up. Just sayin’.

Starting “bench warmer.” It’s easy to sip lattes and judge from the sidelines. But people who can — do. People who can’t — criticize.

Person with promise. It's easy to make promises, but honorable people keep them. I promise.

Monday-morning quarterback. It's easy to predict the past, but everything is obvious in retrospect.

Procrastinator. It's easy to make a New Year's resolution, but promises are meaningless unless you keep them. Even those you make to yourself.

Dreamer. It's easy to have grandiose ambitions, but dreams, unlike eggs, don't hatch from sitting on them.

Role model (not). It's easy to say what you stand for, but if words aren't supported by actions, they're meaningless. Saying one thing, doing another doesn't cut it. Do as I do, not as I say.

Do-gooder. It's easy to volunteer others, but generous people don't just talk a good game: they raise their *own* hand as well.

Sorry person. It's easy to offer an apology, but words are meaningless unless you modify your behavior.

BIG talker. It's easy to boast about *past* achievements, but what have you accomplished *lately*?

LET'S TALK TURKEY

Big talkers are so good at talking a good game that they allow their words to become a substitute for action. They voice their intent, but rarely act.

They complain rather than get in the game. They promise everything and deliver nothing. These folks know that their promises require action at some point in the future. And they pray that tomorrow never comes — but it does. And that has trouble written all over it.

If you talk out of both sides of your mouth, your behavior's eventually going to catch up with you. At some point the bill will come due, and you'll be expected to deliver on your word. Sure...you can probably dance to your own tune for a while. But just like the game of musical chairs — you never know when the music will stop.

When that happens, you can talk till you're blue in the face, but people will see right through you. It'll destroy the trust, credibility, and respect that took you so long to build up. In fact, from that point forward, people will question everything you say. Worse yet, you may even begin to doubt yourself.

If you want to be taken seriously, remember not to confuse talking a good game with living up to your word. When you say something...mean it. Act on your intentions, keep your promises, and honor your commitments. Make your voice stand for something. And make sure that your vows carry the full weight of your integrity. Promise yourself that you'll live by these principles from this day forward. Do I have your word that you'll give this some thought? Good...now we're talking the same language! :)

IS THE GRASS GREENER?

“IF THE GRASS IS GREENER ON THE
OTHER SIDE OF THE FENCE, CHANCES ARE
IT’S GETTING BETTER CARE.”

“**H**ow are you doing?” Simple question, right? There are at least two ways to answer. The first is to think of the ways that you’re blessed and highlight some of them in your response. The second is to compare yourself to others.

We compare ourselves to others all the time. We compare ourselves to friends on social media, colleagues at the office, and even strangers at the gym. We rate our appearance, possessions, performance, and even our problems. In doing so, we rarely consider whether the person we’re comparing to received a head start, whether genetics played a role, or whether we’re even comparing apples to apples. The belief is, if you’re doing better than others, that’s good, and if you’re doing worse, that’s bad.

Is your satisfaction based on what you *have* or on what you *don’t* have?

WHY YOU SHOULD STOP COMPARING YOURSELF TO OTHERS

Comparing yourself to others can leave you with several possible conclusions. From a positive perspective, benchmarking yourself against others may encourage you to become better. You might think, “If they can do it, so can I.” From a negative viewpoint, you might become so obsessed with how *you* measure up that you try to keep up with the Joneses at any cost.

“If they have it, I want it too,” you think. In addition, you might adopt a pessimistic and unrealistic view of the situation. “Life is unfair. Everyone has it better and easier than me,” you may think. This could make you angry or jealous and cause you to stop trying.

In most cases, it is extremely counterproductive to compare yourself to others. As Theodore Roosevelt said, “Comparison is the thief of joy.” Here are six reasons why:

Perfection is an illusion. We’re often blind to the *real* challenges that people face. Although you might think someone doesn’t have a care in the world, they might be like a duck — calm on the surface but paddling like mad under the water.

Comparisons are hardly ever fair. It’s difficult to judge a running race if people begin at different starting lines. In fact, most of those boasting of hitting a home run were actually born on third base.

Comparison can turn into judgment. It is very easy for a well-intentioned comparison to turn into harsh judgment.

Beauty is subjective. Some things can’t be quantified; beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

Some things can’t be changed. You might want to be younger — good luck with that.

Comparison can turn friends into adversaries. Some things start out as a friendly competition, but end up with hurt feelings.

KEEP YOUR EYES ON YOUR OWN PAPER

In school, it was common for a teacher to pass out a test and say, “Keep your eyes on your own paper.” There are two takeaways from that remark. First, cheating doesn’t pay. Second, it doesn’t matter how the person next to you answers the questions — think for yourself and come up with your own answers.

You were born with a unique set of fingerprints. In order to realize your true potential, it’s important to be bold, live your *own* life, and accept responsibility for the choices that you make. According to Zen Shin, “A flower does not think of competing with the flower next to it. It just blooms.”

In addition, keeping up with the Joneses is like chasing a rainbow. While it might look beautiful from a distance, it will always be beyond your grasp. By trying to keep up with the Joneses, we place artificial demands on ourselves that undermine our happiness. These demands force us to work harder and harder to cross a finish line that keeps moving.

If you appreciate what you have, you’ll never want for more. So the next time you’re tempted to compare yourself to others, don’t waste your time. If the grass is greener on the other side of the fence, chances are it’s getting better care. :)

KARMA: MAKE YOUR OWN LUCK

"KARMA IS LIKE A BOOMERANG. I HOPE YOU HAVE MANY HAPPY RETURNS."

Sometimes I see people do things and I shake my head, thinking, "What's wrong with them? What are they thinking?" Some of those folks believe that rules don't apply to them or that they're above the law. Others think their deeds won't catch up with them. The truth is, they may get away with "murder" for a week, a month, or even years. BUT, as long as karma exists, people ultimately get what they deserve.

Karma isn't always bad. In fact, it's the natural law of cause and effect. Simply put, karma means "what goes around comes around." If you emit good energy, it'll come back full circle — like a boomerang. The same holds true for negative behavior.

If you want good karma,* you not only have to *do good*, but you must *be good*. In fact, good karma is created through your *thoughts* and *intentions*, as well as your *deeds*. In other words, good begets good.

Karma is like a boomerang. I hope you have many happy returns.

KARMA: GOOD THINGS HAPPEN FOR A REASON (BAD THINGS, TOO)

Here are eight powerful reasons to invest in *your* karma:

Create better self-esteem. Take great pride knowing that you're a person of high moral character.

Produce stronger relationships. Maintain fair, honest, trusting, and selfless relationships because people mirror the treatment they receive from you.

Build a solid reputation. Gain the trust of others because people know what you stand for and that you continuously exhibit honorable behavior.

Generate lower stress levels. Reduce anxiety because you don't carry the guilt and shame of leading a disreputable life.

Retain a clear conscience. Get a good night's sleep knowing that your intentions are always admirable and your behavior is just.

Attain greater happiness. Gain satisfaction knowing that you give more than you take, that you bring out the best in others, that you make a difference in people's lives, and that you help make the world a better place.

Achieve greater success. Get what you deserve. Luck is nothing more than good karma doing its job.

Enjoy a greater sense of purpose. Achieve true happiness knowing that you live a virtuous life.

DON'T LOOK NOW, BUT YOUR KARMA IS WATCHING

When some people do things, they often have an “angle.” They *want* or *expect* something in return. If you think you can trick karma by concealing your motives or performing a few niceties, you’ve got it all wrong. It’s not enough to go through the motions of doing a good deed every once in a blue moon; it’s your motive that counts.

It comes down to the way you choose to view and live your life. We’re all part of a world in which everything is connected and interrelated. If your thoughts, intentions, and deeds are heartfelt and beneficial to others, you will produce good karma. When you do something thoughtful, however, do it for the right reason. Make sure your intention is honorable and your motive is pure. That will furnish all the benefits good karma offers. The next time you think you can’t make your own luck, remember your karma, and think again! :)

*It’s important to note that I’m using the term *karma* in a spiritual rather than a religious sense.

CHANGE A LIFE AND YOU MAY END UP CHANGING YOURS

“YOU MAY NOT BE ABLE TO CHANGE
THE WORLD, BUT YOU CAN CHANGE
THE WORLD AROUND YOU.”

Think about a person who's had a tremendous impact on your life. It may be your Mom or Dad who believed in you, the coach who inspired you, the teacher who guided you in the right direction, the boss who gave you your first big opportunity, or the friend who's always been by your side. I'm sure when you think of that person, it brings a huge smile to your face — as it should.

You may say that some of these folks were just doing their job. True. But even though you've had several good teachers, coaches, and bosses over the years, I'm sure a few of them really stand out from the crowd. You remember their passion, dedication, kindness, and, of course, their generosity. After all, they changed your life!

That obviously begs the question...are *you* leaving a lasting impact on others? It only takes one person to change a life — and that one person may as well be you.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Whether you're aware of it or not, you're touching the lives of people every day. What can you do to step up your game?

Be an exemplary role model. Lead by example. Demonstrate that character is the DNA of success and happiness.

Be an awesome parent. Having kids is not the same as being a parent. Raise your kids to be kind, productive, and self-reliant; to make good choices and to be personally responsible for their actions; to pursue their purpose with gusto; and to live their life with honor and dignity.

Be a humble leader. Share your success. As you climb the ladder of success, reach down and pull others up with you.

Be a dedicated mentor. Take someone under your wing and show them the ropes. Give the kind of advice that they won't hear anywhere else.

Be a compassionate boss. Show your employees that work isn't all business. Build trusting relationships. Make yourself available and supportive in times of need.

Be a shrewd businessperson. Develop win-win rather than winner-take-all relationships. Prove that there's more to go around when you grow a large pie, together, than when you squabble to divide a smaller one.

Be a *real* friend. Demonstrate loyalty when someone's chips are down and no one else has their back.

Be an inspiration. Set high expectations and push people beyond their capabilities. Show confidence in them when they're having a weak moment.

Be perceptive. Give someone the big break they need in life. See someone's potential even when others are blind to their promise.

Be tough, but fair. Make people accountable for their actions. They'll thank you one day.

Be available. Give the gift of time. Lend a shoulder to cry on when someone needs a friendly ear or support during tough times.

Be the better person. Be the first to give, the first to forgive, the first to compromise, and the first to say “I’m sorry.”

Be even-handed. Stand up for injustice, speak up for the less fortunate, and don’t give up on fairness and tolerance.

Be a loving spouse. Put your heart into your marriage. Share your hopes and your fears, your laughter and your tears, your joy and your sorrow.

CHANGE A LIFE FOREVER

Think of your greatest accomplishments. Where would changing someone’s life rank on your list? Consider: If they hadn’t crossed paths with you, they wouldn’t be the person they are, they wouldn’t have the opportunities they have, and they wouldn’t be positioned to achieve their hopes and dreams. Bravo! You made a difference! As an added bonus, change someone’s life and you may end up changing yours.

Why complain about the ills of the world when you could be a world of difference to someone you know? You may not be able to change the world, but you can change the world around you. Change a life and create a ripple that cascades forever. :)

THE POWER OF ONE

“ONE PERSON CAN MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE.
AND THAT ONE PERSON IS YOU!”

Sometimes we feel the world is so large and complex that it's impossible for any one of us to make a difference. When something comes up that requires action, we think, “I'm only one person. What can I do anyway?” The result is that we sit back and wait for others to make the first move — that is, if anyone else is willing to make the effort.

BUT, what if we tried? What if we shed our fears and inhibitions and others did so as well? What if we challenged ourselves to stand up and be counted, and we each made a difference in our own special way? Or, better yet, what if enough people stepped forward and accepted the challenge along with us? The truth is, we might be able to change the world. As Steve Jobs said, “The people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do.”

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE (IF YOU TRY)

Still unconvinced that one person can make a difference? Tell that to the angel who saved the patient's life by donating her organ, to the craftsman who helped his poor neighbor by rebuilding their weather-torn home, or to the couple who showed the true meaning of love by adopting a foster child. They gave of themselves and are changing lives as a result.

You don't have to do something life-changing to make a difference. Your deed can be as simple as making someone feel special, reaching out to a lonely person, helping a troubled kid find the right path, or comforting a friend who needs a shoulder to cry on. The fact is that you'll be changing the world one good deed at a time.

DREAMS, UNLIKE EGGS, DON'T HATCH FROM SITTING ON THEM

Let all the toxic people complain up a storm, let the naysayers say that it can't be done. The truth is, you can't (or should I say, won't) make a difference if you don't try. Here are four guidelines to keep in mind:

Believe. Have faith that one person can make a difference, and that one person is you.

Act. There are opportunities all around you. Don't wait for someone else to make the first move. Choose one and do something about it.

Lead. Be the change that you want to see in the world. Don't just talk a good game. Lead the way.

Transform. Throw a pebble into the water and create ripples. Little wins create momentum; consistency can turn into lasting change.

DON'T LOOK TO OTHERS; LOOK TO YOURSELF

Think what would happen if everyone shouted out their window at the same time. The sound would be unnerving. Now think of the impact that we could have if we collectively made someone feel special, mentored a colleague, or helped a person in need. The impact would be astounding.

There is power in numbers. One person can get things started; a second person can create some momentum; a third person may influence others to join in. And, before you know it, you've created a movement.

The world is changing every day. If enough people create a ripple for change, we can create a better future. Your choice: Complain about all the things that are wrong or be the person who helps to make them right. One person can make all the difference. And that one person is YOU! :)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Frank Sonnenberg is an award-winning author. He has written seven books and over 300 articles. Frank was recently named one of “America’s Top 100 Thought Leaders” and one of “America’s Most Influential Small Business Experts.” Frank has served on several boards and has consulted to some of the largest and most respected companies in the world.

Additionally, *FrankSonnenbergOnline* was named among the “Best 21st Century Leadership Blogs”; among the “Top 100 Socially-Shared Leadership Blogs”; and one of the “Best Inspirational Blogs On the Planet.”

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— **JAMES STROCK**

Author of *Serve to Lead*

"If you only have time to read one book this decade, make it *Soul Food*. It is not a book to be read. It is a recipe to be lived."

— **AUGUST TURAK**

Templeton Prize-winning author of *Brother John: A Monk, a Pilgrim and the Purpose of Life*