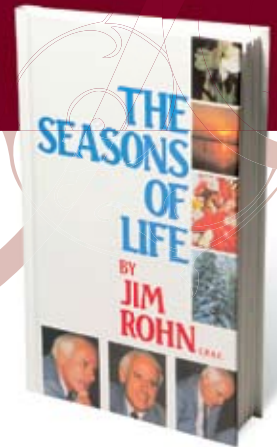


# The Seasons of Life

by Jim Rohn

## *Living in a Season of Hope*

PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE BY LIVING FULLY IN THE PRESENT AND LEARNING FROM THE PAST



## QUICK OVERVIEW

The life of a farmer cycles through the year, based on the seasons that dictate when he plants his crops, tends them and harvests them. In *The Seasons of Life*, motivational speaker and author Jim Rohn uses examples from the farmer's life to explain that we are in control of the direction our lives take. Spring is the time to enter the "fertile fields of life" with determination, knowledge and commitment, the time to plant or create things of value. During the summer, we need to protect growing things. Fall is a time to rejoice in what has grown during summer or to regret that which should have been accomplished. And winter is the time for gratitude and rest, as well as regrouping for the future. Throughout the seasons, Rohn stresses that we reap what we sow, for better or for worse, and that adversity makes us stronger.

## APPLY AND ACHIEVE

The path to success is an individual journey, and what will lead to one man's success can doom another to failure. Certain basic truths are integral to any path one chooses. For example, we are all the sum total of the events, people, thoughts, disappointments, doubts and dreams that we have accumulated in our life. But of the greatest importance isn't what happened yesterday; it is what we do with each day. Rohn recommends making the past a servant for the future and allowing it to teach us how to make better decisions. To that end, he urges readers to cast aside sources of negativity, including friends, family members and business associates who help to kill hope, ambition and enthusiasm through their negative attitudes. Will that be easy? Of course not, Rohn writes. But it is absolutely necessary to "weed out" the garden of our lives. Tell the whole painful truth, not a half truth. Eat alone rather than eat with someone whose conversation is negative. Change the conversation if it degrades someone. And say no rather than yes to something you don't want to do. Commit your life to changing things for the better.

Written by Jim Rohn  
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## SUCCESS Points

*From this book you will learn:*

- The importance of taking responsibility for your own success, rather than blaming circumstances for your failures
- Why it's important to decide if the people around you are the ones who should stay by your side as you try to change your life
- That it's what you do today that creates tomorrow
- How to develop the skill of dealing with negativity

# SUMMARY

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### THE CYCLES AND SEASONS OF LIFE

All of us, whether rich or poor, young or old, educated or not so educated, are the sum total of all of those people and events that have touched us since first entering this world. What we are and what we have, we have slowly brought upon ourselves. Those people and events which have left their mark—whether favorable or unfavorable—are now behind us. What happened even as recently as yesterday is no longer of any consequence, unless we choose to allow it to be. What is of great importance is who and what it is that leaves its mark today, and each day thereafter. What we *have been* is an established and unchangeable fact. What we can *yet become* is an unlimited, boundless opportunity. Therefore, do not allow your awareness of past difficulty or failures to adversely affect your current and future possibilities. The greatest value of the past is how wisely we invest it in the future. Let the past be a servant for making the future both more enjoyable and profitable.

### THE EFFECT OF ENVIRONMENT ON CIRCUMSTANCE

We sometimes can accumulate a mixture of the people and environments of life, which, if not altered in some way, will assure that our future will be just about like our past. Each of us is affected in a negative way by *something* each day. One of the great challenges of life is to have both the wisdom to recognize those sources of negativity and the courage to cast them aside, if necessary. None of us would voluntarily drink a glass of deadly poison if we knew what it was, and yet each of us has friends, or relatives, or business associates whose effect on us is just as deadly as the glass of poison. The difference is that one form of poison kills instantly—once consumed, the body recoils, weakens and then all bodily functions cease. Other “poisons” kill hopes, ambitions, enthusiasm and the thirst for achievement.

There are those who will discourage those in search of a better occupation, and yet it is essential that each of us find what we were “meant to do” if true happiness is to be found. In countless ways, we wander through life allowing people and their attitudes and ideas to mold *our* character—people whose attitudes and ideas have brought *themselves* little in the way of progress, productivity or happiness.

Unpopular as it may seem, each of us accumulates people, customs, attitudes, habits, opinions and philosophies which we very simply cannot afford to keep—if we seek honestly after an improved life. If our attitudes, results or happiness is to ever improve, we must exercise the painful discipline required for “weeding out” the garden of our life.

Better than *many* of the *wrong* friends are *a few* of the *right* friends. Better than *a few* of the *wrong* friends are *no* friends at all! Life is a delicate maneuver of selection, rejection, review and change. Each person entering our world brings either a contribution or destruction. Trying to be “always nice” is to invite certain disaster. A major challenge in life is for each person to learn the art of standing guard at the doorway of their mind. The words, opinions and comments of others are constantly taking their toll on each of us.

If humans are ever going to change their personal and financial circumstances from one level up to another, we must accept the fact that such progress must consist of “doing” as well as “un-doing.” Many of the events and people who currently influence us must be sacrificed. Those sources of doubt, worry, negativity, greed and selfishness must be cut free, for as long as *that* influence remains, change will not likely occur. “Undoing” the past is difficult enough by itself even without those who, by their conversation, remarks or attitudes keep pulling us back toward that which we’re trying to leave behind.

The value of surrounding yourself with the *right* friends is immeasurably awesome. The danger of surrounding yourself with the *wrong* friends can be devastating. Perhaps a good theme might be, “Friendship in proportion to the right personal growth from that friendship.” And finally, be aware that the “right” friends should not be equated to those with the “most” money. It is the attitudes, awareness and other positive human virtues of the friends we select that are of importance.

### THE CONSTANT PATTERN OF CHANGE

The only limitation placed on our abilities is our inability to easily recognize our unlimited nature. It is ironic that one of the few things in this life over which we have total control is our own attitudes, and yet most of us live our entire life behaving as though we had no control whatsoever. Attitude determines choice, and choice determines results. All that we

are, and all that we can become, has indeed been left unto us.

For all of us, the only constant factor in life is our feelings and attitudes toward life. A major challenge faced by us all is that we learn to experience the changing of life's cycles without being changed by them. To make a constant and conscious effort to improve ourselves in the face of changing circumstance is to assure a tolerance for the winters of life's events and to permit ourselves the full enjoyment of the blessings of life's harvest come the autumn.

### The Spring

Following the turbulence of winter comes the season of activity and opportunity called springtime. It is the season for entering the fertile fields of life with seed, knowledge, commitment and a determined effort. It is not a time to linger, nor to ponder the possibility of failure. Foolish is the one who would allow springtime to pass while dwelling upon the memory of the successful crop of last fall, or the failure to reap last fall in spite of the massive efforts of last spring. The springtime of life manifests itself infrequently.

With the intelligence, wisdom and freedom of choice given to us as humans, exercise the discipline to plant *in spite of* the rocks, weeds or other obstacles before us. The rocks, weeds and thorns of the world cannot destroy all your seeds if you plant massively enough and intelligently enough.

The warmth, the sun and the fertile fields of the spring are but part of the formula for achievement; the catalyst that produces the final result is intense, honest and consistent human effort, and therein lies the problem. As humans, we are given free agency—the right to choose; the right to use discipline, or not use it; the choice to act with courage, or huddle in fear; the choice to think, or respond out of habit. Above all, the gift of human intelligence, and the freedom of choice that accompanies it, is not a blessing, but a curse, for it allows us to even fool and lie to *ourselves*, which is the height of ignorance.

It is the promise of spring that as we sow, so shall we also reap. Sow lies, reap lies; sow greed, reap poverty; sow inactivity, reap an empty storehouse; choose to procrastinate, and surely an infant giant will grow to become a monster rendering your future action ineffective.

Each day is given to us as a new season of spring. The thoughts, deeds, dreams and efforts of today will provide

### Tips on Changing Your Life

- Do not spend time regretting the past, but invest that time wisely by preparing a better future.
- Develop an understanding and awareness of the fact that all good will be attacked.
- Do not doubt yourself, for where doubt resides, confidence cannot.
- Smile at adversity, and act quickly to eliminate it.
- Do not imagine yourself to be less than you are, nor more than you are, but seek always to become all of which you are capable.
- Invest your time in worthy projects, invest your thoughts toward a worthy occupation, invest your affection toward a worthy recipient and, finally, invest your greatest respect for yourself.
- Choose the good in life in all things, and choose the opportunity as well as the chance to work when springtime smiles on your life.
- Do not allow yourself to become arrogant or discourteous, for both are characteristics adopted by those who seek to cover their weaknesses.

tomorrow's harvest. To neglect the opportunity given to us this day is to delay our better future. Do not use today to mentally relive yesterday or to await the arrival of tomorrow, for tomorrow—when it arrives—will be called *today*. There will be no better day, no better opportunity, no better springtime, no better time to begin than the current moment. Seize the moments as you find them and mold them into your own better future. Today's procrastination will surely be tomorrow's regret.

Life is truly a constant beginning, a constant opportunity and a constant springtime. We need only to learn to look once again at life as we did as children, letting fascination and curiosity give us welcome cause for taking a second look, rather than taking for granted. Fortune, happiness and peace of mind await those who learn to look for the miraculous hidden among the common. The unique blending of sun, soil and seed at the

springtime of seasons will provide predictable and miraculous results for those who will learn to take full and complete advantage of the spring.

### ***The Summer***

Progress in any form and happiness or success in any form require constant effort, for obstacles exist that might discourage the weak and the undeserving. Overcome one obstacle in life, and another appears to fill the void. Life is designed to be a story of achievement *in spite of* adversity, not in the absence of adversity. For without adversity, achievement could not exist. Do not blame the problems and challenges of life for your humbling circumstances. The constant, unrelenting pull of life is downward—giving cause for disappointment, despair and discouragement. There shall always be cause to give up; there shall always be cause for complaint, but engage in complaining, and you add to the downward pull of life.

The summer of life is a time to protect; it is a time for constant daily effort to guard against the busy bugs and the noxious weeds. The spring is a time for the *creation* of things of value, and those things require the season of summer for *growing* and gaining strength that they might yield their result in the coming fall. The end of spring cannot bring an end of human effort—one effort ends and another remains yet to begin.

Develop an understanding and awareness of the fact that all good will be attacked. It is nature's way of qualifying those who are worthy and those who are not. The weeds of life are designed to turn confidence into doubt, trust into suspicion, patience into impatience, and effort into procrastination, worry and eventual defeat. Do not spend valuable time arguing with nature. Learn to accept the perpetual existence of negativity, and learn also that negativity always yields to constant human effort coupled with the constantly growing human faith and attitude. Smile at adversity, and act quickly to eliminate it. Expect adversity, for it shall surely appear. Be grateful for adversity, for it forces the human spirit to grow—for surely, the human character is formed not in the *absence* of difficulty but in our *response* to difficulty.

To accuse others, to feel sorry for ourselves, or to continue rationalizing or making excuses is foolish. Only a massive, voluntary and effective assault on changing *causes* is important. Direct your thought, conversation and full attention to *that* if you wish to change circumstances; concentrate a good share of your

idle hours upon self-development by planning more, reading more and investing more. Invest your time in worthy projects; invest your thoughts toward a worthy purpose; invest your talents toward a worthy occupation; invest your affection toward a worthy recipient; and finally, reserve your greatest respect for yourself, for it is *that* image—what you perceive yourself to be—that determines the quality of life.

Let's face it: People and events are going to continue to both hurt and disappoint you. Among the people will be those you love most, as well as those you know least. It has been this way through 6,000 years of recorded history, and your hurt or

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grief is not the first time a human has been deeply hurt by the inappropriate actions of another. The only way to avoid being touched by life—the good as well as the bad—is to withdraw from society, and even then, you will disappoint yourself, and your imaginings about what is going on out there will haunt you and hurt you. Knowing this, there is but one solution that will support you when people and events hurt you, and that is to learn to work harder on your own personal growth than anything else.

### ***The Fall***

For those who planted abundantly in the spring, and who fought against the bugs, weeds and weather of summer, fall can bring rewards, which give cause for rejoicing. For those who *watched* both the arrival and departure of spring, and who made little effort to take advantage of its almost momentary tenure, fall can be a time of turmoil, a time of anxiety and a time of great regret. It is in the fall when we discover how long or short the winter will be. The fall tells us if we have *really* done that which is required.

The law of the universe is faultless. It applies equally well to the farmer as to the businessperson. The law is equally applied to all things and all people. The law has endured since the creation of the world, and for that long, men have sought to circumvent

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it, or argue with it, and even to ignore it. In the end, our results demonstrate if we have obeyed its orders, or disobeyed. The law is simple, and known to all. The law is “*As you sow, so shall you reap.*”

In all areas of the human existence, be aware that what we put into this world, we get back from it. It is nature’s way of “evening the score.” Both thoughts and actions determine the result, the lifestyle and the human attitude. Lies, sooner or later, attract lies in return. Finding an easier way at the expense of quality will take its inevitable toll in decreased profits and sleepless nights. All effort, be it service, marketing, recruiting or products must bring good to all those who are involved or the effort will not withstand the final test of time. Corn planted in the spring will produce corn in the fall, as will wheat, barley or melons produce after *their* own kind. You cannot plant one crop and expect to reap another just because you change your mind during midsummer.

### Dealing with Defeat

It is in the face of adversity that things begin to change, and the “things” always change as a result of the personal change that takes place. Things never change—not by themselves. It’s when a human, with sufficient disgust, desire and determination to change his life finally steps up to the bar of human justice and shouts for all the world to hear, “I have had it with defeat and humiliation, and I will tolerate it no longer.” Life is going to continue... even though you may not be defeated. The world will wake up tomorrow just as it did today, and events will continue to unfold with repeated regularity. Someone once suggested to me that I should say to myself, “This too shall pass” each time I was tempted to think I had accepted all the negativity and failure that my life could tolerate. You can go where you want to go, do what you want to do, become what you want to become... right from where you are.

In the fall, we either enjoy or we excuse. For those who failed to take full advantage of the spring, who failed to guard their crops carefully throughout the heat of summer, there can be no legitimate reasons, only excuses, and excuses are merely apologetic attempts to place blame on circumstances rather than on ourselves. Massive action in the spring of life still is the requirement for massive success in the fall. Forty hours a week spent in the fields of opportunity may not be enough, especially if it is spent in the wrong field. And while there is great difficulty involved in changing one field for another more fertile field, *that* difficulty is insignificant compared to the *ultimate difficulty that comes from not changing.*

### The Winter

The first great lesson of life to learn is that winter will always come; not only in the winter of cold, wind, ice and snow, but the human winters of despair and loneliness, or disappointment, or tragedy. Winter comes in many forms, and at any time, both to the planter of crops as well as to the person in business, or even to our personal lives.

The arrival of winter finds us in one of two categories: Either we are prepared or we are unprepared. To those who are prepared, who have planted abundantly in the spring, guarded their crops carefully during the summer, and harvested massively during the fall, winter can be yet another season of opportunity. Winter is a time for rest, but not *excessive* rest. What we do with our time, with ourselves, with our friends and with our attitudes during the season of winter determines what we will do with the coming spring.

We are meant to constantly improve our conditions, our results and ourselves. We either improve or we regress, for never do we remain the same. If we do not improve, it is because we do not use our intelligence, our reasoning, and our full potential—and finally, what we do *not* use, we lose. Through lack of use, we may lose our intelligence, reasoning, potential and strength. And when lack of use, or misuse, costs us these worthy human attributes, we predictably regress.

To those who are prepared for winter’s arrival, let them use winter as they would use spring—to take advantage. To those who are unprepared, the arrival of winter is a time for regret and a time for sorrow. The major challenge confronting those surrounded by winter is to not let it affect the arrival of spring, and our ability to recognize that arrival. Much of life is

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in learning to always remain part of the solution rather than allowing ourselves to become part of the problem. Only those worthy human attributes of honesty, loyalty, love and trust in God and in our fellow man are meant to remain constant. Winter is a time for being grateful for our achievements, or for having endured our *lack* of achievement.

## DEFEAT—THE BEST BEGINNING

Someone once said, “Don’t pray for things to be easier, rather, pray for more obstacles and more challenges, for it is out of *these* that man’s character and will to succeed are formed.” Nearly every success story that I am aware of began when the person first lay flat on his mental and financial back. In this condition, people usually become sufficiently disgusted to reach deep down inside and pull out talents, abilities, desire and determination—the essentials required of anyone wishing for things to get better. It is in the face of adversity that things begin to change, and the “things” always change as a result of the personal change that takes place.

Your role of present failure, or success, is a temporary condition. You will rebound from failure as surely as you gravitated into failure. So, foolish as it may sound, thank God for your present limitations or failure, if that should be the case, for you now occupy a status from which nearly all success stories originate. From this moment on, and for what remains of the balance of your life, make your commitment to excellence, remembering that it is your challenge to succeed.

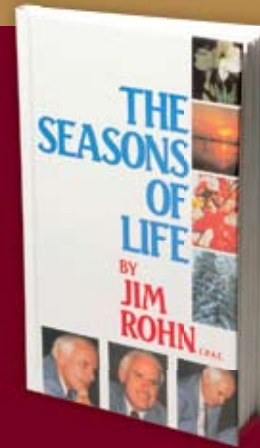
## Recommended Reading

If you enjoy *The Seasons of Life*, check out:

**The 12 Factors of Business Success: Discover, Develop and Leverage Your Strengths** by Kevin Hogan, Dave Lakhani and Mollie Marti

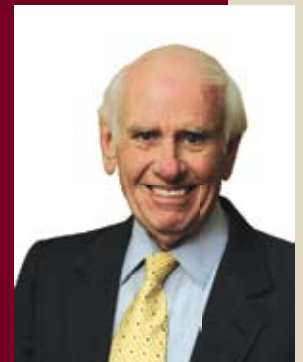
**The Tibetan Art of Positive Thinking: Skillful Thought for Successful Living** by Christopher Hansard

**The Perfect Business** by Michael Leboeuf



## About the Author

Successful motivational speaker Jim Rohn was born on a farm in Idaho in 1930. After only one year in college, he left school to start a family and get a job. A half-dozen years later, Rohn was in debt and couldn’t imagine a way out. That’s when he met entrepreneur John Earl Shoaff, who impressed Rohn with his business accomplishments, charisma and life philosophy. Rohn joined Schoaff’s direct selling organization and began to take his life in a more profitable direction. By the time he reached his early 30s, Rohn was a millionaire.



Rohn’s inspirational rags-to-riches story was the foundation of his career as a motivational speaker and writer. He is the author of 25 books and audio and video programs, and has shared his story with millions around the world. He describes his philosophy as being based on fundamentals, rather than novel ideas and concepts. For example, “you reap what you sow” is the basis for *The Seasons of Life*.

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