

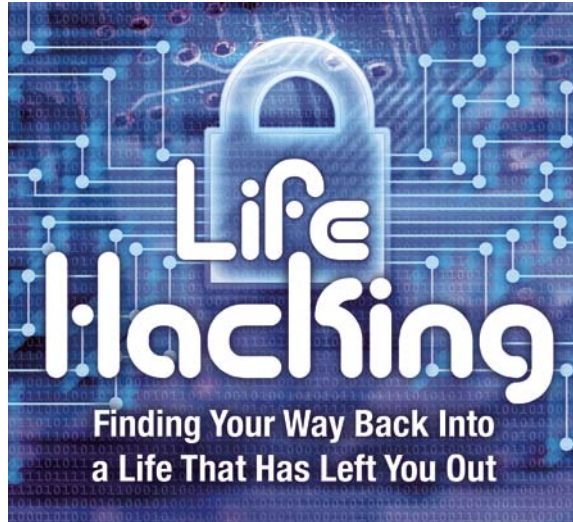
Life Hacking

The term, **hacking**, has a double meaning:

Violation—getting somewhere a person is not supposed to be.

Penetration—ability to gain access and operate in a previously closed environment.

“Life Hacking” is a term coined at a 2004 technology conference by British tech guru, Danny O’Brien. In his original presentation, O’Brien used this term to describe self-improvement skills for the growing digital subculture. Life hacking is a way to manage technological growth and development in a way that makes life better.



My goal in this series is not to teach technological short cuts or provide self-improvement suggestions, but to offer spiritual solutions to complex issues and “fire walls” that have created conflict, crisis and resistance in our daily lives.

“For most people—geeks or not—modern life is just this incredibly complex problem amenable to no good obvious solutions.” —Danny O’Brien

“Life hacking communities focus not just on efficiency, but also on making life more satisfying.”
—*Time Magazine*

“Life hacks are about getting things done and solving life’s problems with modest solutions... they boil down self-help to actionable nuggets on subjects that range from workplace negotiations to travel planning.”
—Merlin Mann, 43 Folders

Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide **the way of escape**, that you may be able to endure it. —1 Corinthians 10:11-13

There are many biblical accounts of people who struggled with the same issues we face today. In this series, we will explore the lives of some of these people and discover God’s secrets for hacking in life.

Read the story of Samson found in Judges 13-16.

“If you could kick the person responsible for most of your troubles, you couldn’t sit down for a week.” —Theodore Roosevelt

Life Hacking: Samson

1) You complicate your life by failing to learn from your mistakes.

Samson had two glaring weaknesses: desire and temper. He gave himself to lust and physical indulgence, and he lived for revenge.

2) You miscalculate the compounding influence of wrong friends.

You are asking for trouble if you allow yourself to be influenced by the wrong people.

“If you want to soar with eagles, you can’t run around with turkeys.”

“The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray.”
—Proverbs 12:26

3) You underestimate the importance of taking God seriously.

God is a “convenience” to many people, an after thought or a place to run in case of an emergency. Many people fail to hear and heed His wisdom for life.

Samson was careless about his spiritual life. God had a plan and purpose for Samson, but Samson was too busy with plans of his own. At the end of his life, we see Samson praying and seeking God, but the majority of his life was driven by his own impulses.

We need God’s strength for life today. This can only begin when we turn our lives over to Him.

Overcoming Overcommitment

"Getting Things Done" (GTD) is the mind-set of most people in the work place today.

"A man is rich in proportion to the number of things he can afford to let alone."

—Henry David Thoreau

In Exodus 18, we learn how Moses struggled to balance family and leadership responsibilities.

Read Exodus 18:13-24

Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good" (Exodus 18:17 ESV).

Jethro encouraged Moses to delegate responsibilities by selecting capable men from the among people and placing them *over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens* (Exodus 18:21 ESV).

Delegation is Not Dumping

"Successful people don't allow the unimportant things in their lives to become important. And conversely, they don't allow the important things to become unimportant. They form a habit of spending their best resources on their best pursuits. In short, they order their activities so that they're always gravitating toward success."

—John Maxwell

Delegation is Deciding to Accomplish More by Doing Less

"Being busy does not always mean real work. The object of all work is production or accomplishment. And to either of these ends there must be forethought, system, planning, intelligence and honest pursuit; as well as perspiration. Seeming to do is not doing."

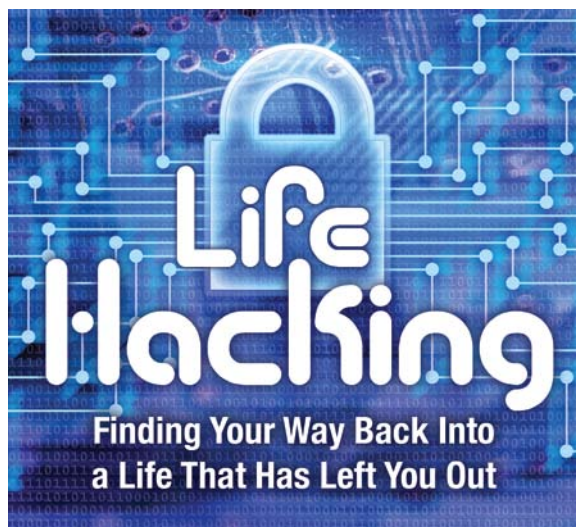
—Thomas Edison

Delegation is Developing a Work Plan That Recognizes and Respects Your Personal Limitations

Read Exodus 18:17-20

Delegation Requires Depending on Others To Do Something You Can Do, But They Can Do Better

Read Exodus 18:21



"It is one of the most beautiful compensations of this life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself."

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

The Solution: Delegation

The Strategy: Implementation

Eliminate Before You Delegate

Don't just assign your "to do" list. Prune first.

"Delegate more effectively—don't just delegate more frequently." —Harvard Business Review

Communicate Before You Delegate

Identify **who** does **what** best, and then talk about **how** to make things happen better together. Ask those around you to help you assess yourself. Remember, *discussion* is not *decision*. Get the facts and then make adjustments and assignments according to strengths.

Delegate in Order to Accelerate

Assess your routine assignments. Are there some tasks and exercises someone else can do to accelerate the start-up and alleviate stress?

Elevate Others When You Delegate

People often want added responsibilities. In most cases, they want to grow and feel more fulfilled and effective.

Delegate, But Don't Abdicate

Take time to train and equip people to do a job that matters. You can add to their effectiveness and importance.

Delegate, Facilitate and Then Watch Others Create

It is amazing the impact and sense of accomplishment a team can have when everyone assumes a responsibility and contributes to the overall goal.

So Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said. —Exodus 18:24 ESV

Dreamality

"Last night I got double rest. I dreamed I was sleeping."

"Some men see things as they are and ask why. I dream things that never were and say, why not?" —George Bernard Shaw

"Somewhere between childhood and adulthood, many of us let go of our dreams. We stop trusting that anything will be different. We stop hoping that anything could get better. We stop expecting life to be full of excitement, anticipation, joy, fun, and hope. Optimism is replaced by anger, frustration, and bitterness. But it doesn't have to be that way."

—Bob Coy

"The best dreams are those that happen with your eyes wide open."

Read Genesis 37:3-8

Dreams Need Definition

"A dream is a wish your heart makes."

—Jiminy Cricket

Dreams involve more than a desire; they require decision. Decision and direction come from varied sources:

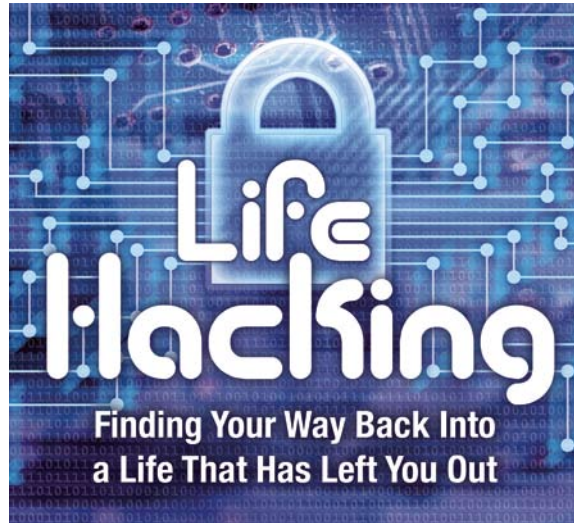
- **Passions** that drive you
- **Experiences** that shape you
- **Knowledge** that reinforces you
- **Beliefs** that hold you

Dreams Face Refinement

Read Genesis 39

Joseph made some hard choices and that presented difficult consequences. However, his choices were wise and ultimately brought success. Joseph refused to defeat himself by making poor choices and taking short cuts.

"It isn't the dream that gets tested—it's the dreamer. When God gives a dream, there's nothing wrong with it. But the dreamer probably needs a lot of work." —Don Murren



"God never simply buries our dead and broken dreams because He'd be burying our hearts along with our dreams. Instead, He creatively turns our failures into fertilizer for an even more wonderful dream, a dream with even more potential to become fruition."

—Noni Tari

Dreams Involve Relationships

"The way to get what you want in life is to help other people to get what they want in life." —Zig Ziglar

You need people to help facilitate your dream. Dreams don't happen in a vacuum.

"...the Lord was with Joseph..." —Genesis 39:23

Dreams Develop Incrementally

It took a long time for Joseph's dream to be fulfilled, but each step in his journey was part of the dream fulfillment.

Dreams May Delay

If you don't experience the fulfillment of your dream, it doesn't mean that you don't achieve it in life. History is full of biographies of people whose dreams were fulfilled beyond their lifetime.

Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers... and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. —Matthew 1:2, 16

But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good... —Genesis 50:20 ESV

Passing on Perfectionism

Mistake Maxim: "Nobody is perfect."

Performance Maxim: "Practice makes perfect."

"They tell you nobody is perfect. Then they tell you practice makes perfect. I wish they would make up their minds."
—Wilt Chamberlain

"Striving for excellence motivates you; striving for perfection is demoralizing."

—Harriet Braiker

"Perfection is the voice of the oppressor." —Anne Lamott

What is perfectionism? "...a disposition to regard anything short of perfection as unacceptable; *especially*: the setting of unrealistically demanding goals accompanied by a disposition to regard failure to achieve them as unacceptable and a sign of personal worthlessness." —Merriam-Webster Dictionary

"Perfectionism is not a quest for the best. It is a pursuit of the worst in ourselves, the part that tells us that nothing we do will ever be good enough—that we should try again." —Julia Cameron

Read Luke 10:38-42

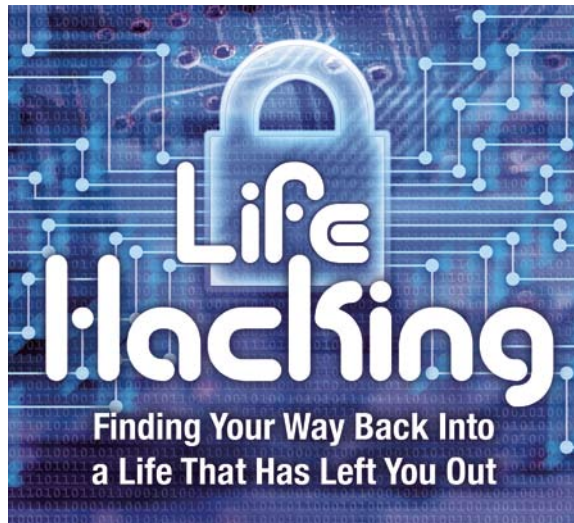
You might be a perfectionist if...

- You can't stop thinking about a mistake you made.
- You are intensely competitive and can't stand doing worse than others.
- You either want to do something "just right" or not at all.
- You demand perfection from other people.
- You won't ask for help if asking can be perceived as a flaw or weakness.
- You will persist at a task long after other people have quit.
- You feel a constant need to correct other people when they are wrong.
- You are highly aware of other people's demands and expectations.
- You are very self-conscious about making mistakes in front of other people.
- You noticed the error in the headline of this section.

—Gordon Flett and Paul Hewitt

Start Each Day With This Maxim: "God is Perfect and I'm not."

In Matthew 5:48, Jesus said, "You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."



However, since people are not perfect, we need a perfect Savior to pay for our sins.

Separate the Goal of Professionalism From the Ideal of Perfectionism

"Anything worth doing is worth doing poorly." —Tom Peters

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

—Colossians 3:23-24

Study the Flawed Pathway of personal Advancement and Individual Achievement

"The most difficult part of attaining perfection is finding something to do as an encore."

In 2 Corinthians 12:8-10, the Apostle Paul said, "Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

"Supersize" the Perils of Perfectionism

By pride comes nothing but strife, but with the well-advised is wisdom. —Proverbs 13:10 NKJV

See Your Worth in God's Eyes as Based on His Grace and Not on Your Works!

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. —Ephesians 2:8-10

Freedom from Failure

"Failure is one of the hardest and harshest realities of life."

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. —1 Corinthians 10:13 ESV

Read 5:1-11.

Peter and the fishermen were cleaning their nets after experiencing the failure of not catching any fish. Jesus stepped onto Peter's boat, and after teaching the people, Jesus instructed Peter to take the boat out again to deep water and let down the nets. Peter did as Jesus said and the nets were filled to overflowing.

When it comes to failure...

- **Sometimes your best is not enough.**

Peter came back with an empty boat. It is easy to feel defeated and discouraged when you give your best and experience failure in the task.

- **Past successes do not guarantee future victories.**

So often, we "get on a roll" and assume we are invincible. However, Peter learned failure as his point of strength. Yet, failure turned Peter's heart toward surrender and service.

- **Nothing is harder than the "Risk of Return."**

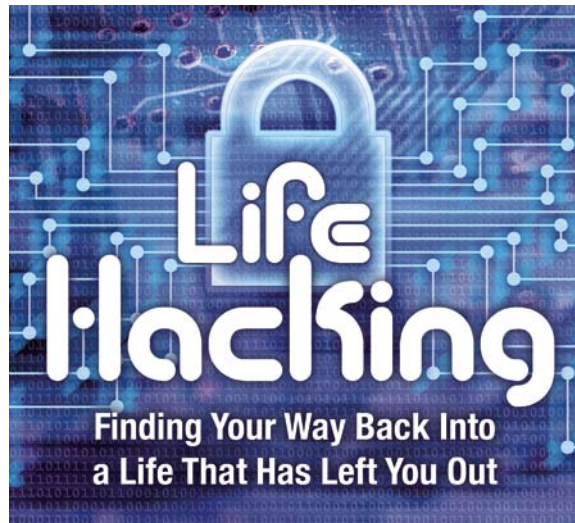
We must risk returning to the place of failure. There are four things to remember when you experience failure:

Attitude—Peter experienced a new attitude in his fishing: humility

Opportunity—Peter left shallow waters for the open sea.

Growth—"Success is to be measured, not so much by the position that one has reached in life, as by the obstacles which he has overcome by trying to succeed." —Booker T. Washington

Faith—*The steps of the godly are directed by the Lord. he delights in every detail of their lives. Though they stumble, they will not fall, for the Lord holds them by the hand. —Psalm 37:22-23 NLT*



- **You can be your own worst enemy.**

Much of failure is "self-inflicted stubbornness."

"To err is human, but it's stupid to continue."

Why do we fail?

- Haste or carelessness
- Lack of patience and perseverance
- Poor quality or inadequate equipment
- Lack of knowledge

- Poor timing
- Lack of vision
- Selfishness
- Unwillingness to listen or learn from the experience of others
- Lack of flexibility
- Failure to count the cost

- **Your decision determines your destiny.**

If you choose to dramatize, generalize or categorize something as a failure, it will always be a failure. But if you choose to change the course of the future, you can see failure as a defining moment of opportunity.

"The things that hurt, instruct." —Benjamin Franklin

"We cannot change the past, but we can be changed by the past. Many people are controlled by past sins, past regrets and past failures. The past should be a rudder to guide us and not an anchor to drag us back." —Warren Wiersbe

Peter left all and followed Jesus.

"Satan's strategy is to get believers to become preoccupied with their failures; from then on, the battle is won." —C.S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters

"People say motivation does not last. Well, neither does bathing—and that's why we recommend it daily." —Zig Ziglar

Alleviating Anxiety

“Even the most stable brain operates just a millimeter from madness.”

Dr. Archibald Hart has written 25 books covering many topics that impact the emotional and spiritual health of people. He provides the following definitions concerning fear, worry and anxiety.

Fear is triggered when we feel threatened; it is a response to real or perceived danger.

Worry is a mental exercise that tries to solve situations beyond your control.

Anxiety is a pervasive, inner feeling of nervousness, unrest, or uneasiness that lasts for an extended period of time.

In the book of Genesis, we read about the life journey of Abraham. We usually think of Abraham as a man of faith. However, in Genesis 20, Abraham shows us how fear can cast a shadow over faith and cause anxiety.

Read Genesis 20.

Abraham displayed anxiety that is reflective of how so many of us connive, compromise, and manipulate because of fear. God’s plan is not for our minds to be hi-jacked by anxiety, but rather to live in peace and **B-A-L-A-N-C-E** in life.

Believe peace is possible.

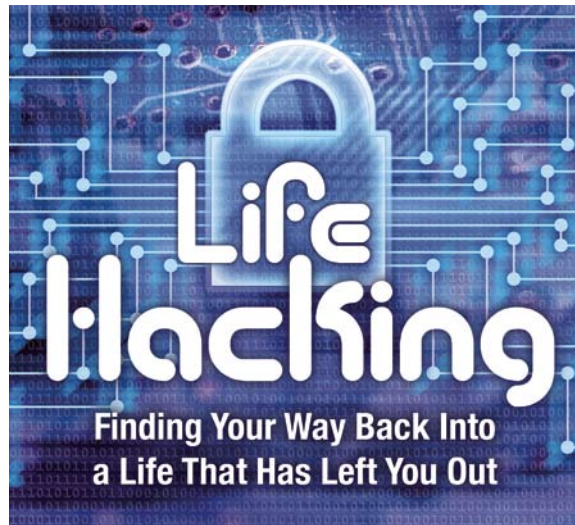
...do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. —Philippians 4:6-7

Assess the impact of anxiety on your life.

“Adrenaline circulating excessively is what causes a lot of our stress... Stress is normal. It becomes harmful when it is continuous, unremitting, and unrelieved. We can have as much arousal as we like as long as it is followed by a period of relaxation, rest and recovery. The body is designed for activation and then recovery—the mountain and valley phenomenon. Distress occurs

when we cannot get down off the mountain and the valley isn’t deep enough to allow adequate recovery. We begin to accumulate the effects of stress.”

—Dr. Archibald Hart



Look for fresh perspective.

Sometimes we stare at something until we cannot see anything else. Prayer and faith can bring fresh perspective.

Allow your thoughts to flow toward healthy outcomes.

Apprehension is normal, but anxiety can debilitate. Too often we become “worst case scenario” expects.

Narrow your focus.

Focus can recover energies for important tasks and responsibilities. Choose to do your best in each situation and disengage yourself from the outcome. So much of life is beyond our control. Trust God’s promises to cover your concerns.

...whatever is true... honorable...just...pure...lovely, ...commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

—Philippians 4:8.

Calculate the sum of your daily passions and pursuits.

“I think the stress problem is—in the ultimate sense—a faith problem. It has to do with our values and with what we’re chasing after in life. It also has to do with our ability to forgive and to deal with hurts that come our way. Anger and resentment have been shown by a number of researchers to be the most damaging emotions from a stress point of view... You need to know what you want out of life. If you pursue wrong things, you are going to be more stressed. You need balance in relationships and balance between work and rest, between activity and recovery time. If you can build in balance, you can live a long and happy life.”

—Dr. Archibald Hart

Exercise the escape of prayer.

... do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. —Philippians 4:6