

Dr. Nat's Steps to Success



At the age of five, Nathaniel Williams and his 11 siblings lost their mother to a brain aneurysm and entered the foster care system of New York City. Today, he dedicates himself to helping others with personal and professional development. He provides training in stress management, time management, ethics, conflict resolution and more. He is the author of six books and hosts a TV show “Navigating Your Life Show with Dr. Nat Williams” providing answers to the challenges of everyday life. He says he doesn’t pursue high-profile media appearances but that offers find him: When a producer heard him call in to a radio show, he offered Dr. Nat his own program. A conversation some months later led to his being offered a TV show. No wonder he’s optimistic: “Whatever happens, I’m sure it will be for the better.” He has a sister in Midlothian and a relative in Norfolk. He and his wife Tade have six children together and are preparing to adopt a seventh. They live in Northampton County, PA. www.nj-williams.com In his own words, Dr. Nat talks about steps to success.

Acceptance is Step One

Understand that it’s all about a strategy, a plan. We have to plan for success as well as challenges. Most people want to leave a legacy and have an impact. We need to embrace that, whether it’s an impact in our children’s lives or our community. Accept who you are. Then you can begin to make the changes. So often we struggle on the first step which is to look ourselves in the eyes and embrace that. If you don’t accept what’s there first, how can you change what you haven’t accepted? Begin

that journey because it's one that never ends. No matter how old you are, I think you should still be trying to make yourself a better person.

His New Book, 'Attaining Your Personal Best'

The book looks at some essential roles that are helpful in attaining your personal best. Understand the difference between your needs and wants. There is importance in enthusiasm. Know who your associates are and make sure they support you. Work to become a different person. A friend of mine says if you want something different, you have to do something different. I slightly altered that and say if you want something different, you have to become different. Another chapter talks about profound solutions. Each chapter takes different points and highlights the importance of getting those perspectives clear. The thrust behind the book is that people think you may do one thing or three things [for success]. But in my experience, there are basically 23 things that a person is trying to keep in balance as they walk in the doorway to their personal best. [This system] has crystallized some of the thoughts that people have had to recognize that you really can't leave any of these things behind. I don't think that it's more of a burden. It provides a sense of clarity about getting where you want to go. People have shared that it's made it easier, not more complicated.



His Defining Moment

One of the things I share with people is my experience in being in a foster care agency in upstate New York. My brothers and sisters were supposed to visit and something happened that they were not able to visit. I was sitting on the front steps looking a little sad when the Executive Director, a Catholic nun, happened to walk by and look at me. She said, hey, you look pretty sad, what happened? I explained to her what happened and she said, I have something to give you.

So she went downstairs to the storeroom and came back trailing this bicycle and gave it to me. For some reason or another, it really struck me in a different kind of way. I just realized at that moment that if I wasn't careful, this was going to be my experience for the rest of my life: looking sad and waiting for people to see my sadness and hopefully do something about it. I realized she was a very powerful woman that she could go downstairs and come back with a bicycle. From that day, I

started signing my name, "Nathaniel J. Williams, Executive Director." It took me several years to get that title, but by the time I was 25, that was the official title I could sign my name to. It was that kind of awakening that my situation was pretty bad. The question was, what could I do to make it better? I had to realize, as painful as it was, that for the most part, I was in the world by myself and I had to make a pathway. I think for most people that's a rather daunting concept but one for me that was liberating. I think if I had held onto the other concepts, I would have been incarcerated by my thoughts instead of being liberated. It made me recognize that I had to do something about my circumstances instead of feeling sorry about them.



Discovering a Career

After spending from the age of 5 in the foster care system, it was very logical for me to stay with what I knew. As an after-school job, I worked with individuals in mental retardation programs. That began my association with human services. I guess in some families, you have fathers who are doctors or lawyers or plumbers and their children follow on in those kinds of work. My situation was the same thing. My surrogate parents worked in human services, so as I got older, guess what? I worked in Human Services to do the same thing.

Dr. Nat's Traits of Success

Respect "We live in a society where respect is conditional. Respect has lost its value. I think we need to make it unconditional and offer respect to people, places and things and give them the respect that they're due."

Responsibility "We all recognize when we've gotten in a situation where people are not responsible and it's caused major issues across different domains of our life whether it's the financial situation or the family situation. Being responsible and accountable is so very important."

Recognition "We think change and success happen overnight. But it really does take a real strategy. I try to encourage people to study success. Look around at people who've accomplished what you hope to do."

Renewal “Find a rock and sit on it. Really look at your self. Figure out who you are and where you want to go. Take some time to make yourself a better person. If you’re in a relationship, take some time. Couples, especially when you have children, it’s so easy to fall apart as you’re raising your family. Parents with kids with disabilities have an even higher rate of falling apart. Taking time to keep renewing that relationship is so very important.”

Resilience “A lot of people think about resilience when there’s a problem. You need to look at resilience when you’re successful as well. Whether you succeed or you’re challenged, you need to be informed by that experience. So often, we want to live in the high end or we think that we’ll be in the low end forever. Most of us live in the middle. When you find yourself going up and down, you need to find resilience to bring yourself back to that equilibrium.”

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