

# The Black Belt Book of Life – Topic #17

## Preparation is the Key to Success

With any project you undertake,  
to limit stress and insure progress,  
the cardinal rule is simply this:  
*Preparation Is The Key To Success.*

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*To be prepared is half the victory.*  
Miguel De Cervantes  
[Author of *Don Quixote*]

*Luck favors the mind that is prepared.*  
Louis Pasteur

*Before everything else,  
getting ready is the secret to success.*  
Henry Ford

*If I had eight hours to chop down a tree,  
I'd spend six hours sharpening my ax.*  
Abraham Lincoln

If you fail to prepare, you prepare to fail. This maxim underscores the importance of preparation in any undertaking or project. If we're going to slay some dragons, we'd better spend a great deal of time creating a plan, rehearsing it and sharpening the blade of our axe or sword *before* the battle is engaged.

Lincoln's statement offers a good model in establishing the amount of time devoted to a project's preparation and its actual execution. He says if he had eight hours to chop down a tree, he'd spend six hours sharpening his ax. Six hours is three quarters or 75% of the entire time devoted to the project! That's enormous. Yet, if one were to query the most successful individuals in any field, the results would most likely be very similar.

There's another maxim which adds texture and meaning to the preparation concept. It's this: *if you don't do it right the first time, how much time will it take to do it right the second time?* And then how much time, money, energy, effort, man-power will be lost in having to get it right, not to mention the dilemma of having to then overcome the depression, frustration, anxiety and let-down of having to do it all over again. Do-overs may be necessary but they can be potentially avoided if one were to functionally understand that *Preparation is the Key to Success*. The moral of the maxim: prepare, prepare, prepare or despair, despair, despair!

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