

6 Keys to Maximizing Your Success  
and Accelerating Your Dreams

rule

your

day

JOEL OSTEEN

*Author of 10 New York Times Bestsellers*

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New York Nashville

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## CHAPTER ONE

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# *Rule Your Day*

**Y**ou have a space that belongs only to you. It's your thoughts, your attitudes, and your emotions. It's who you spend time with. It's what you watch and listen to. That's your atmosphere. That's what you have control over. The reason some people live worried, offended, and negative is because they let everything in. They listen to the news all day, they dwell on the medical report, and they go to lunch with people who are critical. Somebody cuts them off in traffic, and that sours the rest of their morning. The problem is that they're not ruling their atmosphere. You have to be careful what you allow in. You can't stop every negative thing from coming, but you can stop it from getting down in your spirit.

You need to keep your atmosphere full of faith,

full of praise, full of hope, full of victory. It's up to you to say to anything that tries to poison that atmosphere, "No, thanks. You're not welcome here." If somebody leaves you out at work and doesn't invite you to a meeting, the offense will come, saying, "Be angry, be bitter. That's not right." You can let that offense in and live upset, or you can say, "Sorry, offense. You're not welcome here. Sorry, bitterness. There's no place for you. I'm going to stay in peace. I'm going to enjoy this day." You don't have control over what other people do, but you have control over your thoughts, your attitudes, and how you respond.

The writer of Proverbs says, "A person who doesn't rule his spirit is like a city with broken down walls." In King Solomon's time, the walls were what protected the city. If the walls were down, the opposition could come in and take the city. In the same way, if you don't keep some walls up around your spirit, if you don't rule your atmosphere and put up some boundaries, then everything is going to get in. If your child is off course, instead of trusting that God has him in the palms of His hands, worry will get in and you won't be able to sleep at night. If your business slows down or you lose a client, instead of knowing that God is your source and that He's going to provide,

stress will come and anxious thoughts will say, *What am I going to do?* If someone is talking about you, trying to make you look bad, instead of letting God fight your battles, you will let the offense in. You'll live defensive, trying to prove to them that you're okay, which is wasting valuable time on what doesn't matter. You don't need their approval; God has already approved you. Now keep your walls up. Quit allowing all that negativity into your spirit. Your time is too valuable, your assignment too important, to let everything in. Be selective. If it's not positive, hopeful, and of a good report, don't dwell on it. You can't control the whole world, but you can control your atmosphere.

*If you don't keep some walls up around your spirit, if you don't rule your atmosphere and put up some boundaries, then everything is going to get in.*

## Rule over Your Kingdom

The Scripture says that God has made you to be a king, that you are to reign in life. Negative things

will come, but you have to remember that you're the ruler. You have the authority to decide what you allow in. *Am I going to dwell on this offense? Am I going to hang around this person who's pulling me down? Am I going to stay focused on this bad break and live in self-pity?* It's up to you. You rule over your kingdom with your attitudes and with what you choose to focus on.

When we turn on the news, there's so much that's negative. We hear about natural disasters, the divisiveness in politics, the unrest in our society. If you allow that division to get into your spirit, if you allow the disrespect and the anger to get in, it's going

*What are you watching  
and what are you  
listening to?*

to pollute your thoughts, steal your joy, and make you sour. You have to be proactive. What are you watching and what are you listening to? Is it building you up, making you more positive and more hopeful, or is it tearing you down, stressing you out, making you angry and upset? You don't need that in your atmosphere. Life is hard enough without adding all these negative things that make it more difficult.

A man told me that as he drove to work he listened to talk radio for an hour every day. It was

about news and politics, with people calling in to argue and debate. He would get so riled up, so upset, that by the time he got to work he was angry and on edge. He said, “Joel, I didn’t like who I had become. Nobody wanted to be around me. I was so hard to get along with.” One day he happened to come across our SiriusXM station and started to listen. Instead of putting in all the negativity that was contaminating him hour after hour, he started putting in uplifting words of faith, hope, and victory. He said, “I’m a different person now. I’m positive. I’m grateful. I look forward to work. I enjoy the other people.” His coworker even asked him what happened to him, why he was so much happier and friendlier. It was because he got rid of the poison in his atmosphere.

I like to watch the news, and it’s good to stay informed, but you can’t listen to the news for hours a day and stay in faith. You can’t take that into your spirit and have the energy, the focus, and the creativity to be your best. “Well, Joel, I wish God would help me do better.” God has done His part. He made you a king. He’s given you the authority and the power to rule

*You can’t control all that’s around you, but you can control what gets in you.*

your atmosphere. You can't control all that's around you, but you can control what gets in you. Are your walls up? Are you ruling your spirit?

## Who Are You Sitting With?

It's also important who you're spending time with. Evaluate your friendships. Are your friends making you better, inspiring you, and challenging you to go further? Or are they pulling you down, causing you to compromise, and bringing out the worst in you? That's contaminating your atmosphere. You're going to become like the people you hang around. If your friends don't have what you want, if they're not rising to new levels, if they don't have good attitudes, if they're not faithful and trustworthy, you need to make a change. Life is short, and you don't have time to waste with people who are not adding to your life. Yes, we need to help others come up higher, but you need a few friends who help

*Spirits are transferable.*

you come up higher. This is one of the main things that holds people back. If you stop spending time with the wrong people, your life will go to a new level. You shouldn't go to lunch with

people from the office who are jealous, who talk about the boss, who complain about the company. Spirits are transferable. If you hang around jealous people, you're going to become jealous. If you hang around unfaithful people, you're going to become unfaithful.

The Scripture says, "Don't sit inactive in the path of the ungodly." That means you can't be passive when it comes to people polluting your life. "Joel, I've been friends with them for years. If I don't eat lunch with them, they may get their feelings hurt." What if you miss your destiny? What if they keep you from the awesome future God has in store? Don't sit inactive and let them poison your atmosphere. Your ears are not garbage cans to hear gossip. You weren't created to take in the latest rumors. You have greatness in you. God has called you to leave your mark, to take your family to a new level. Don't waste your valuable time on petty things, with small-minded people who are not moving you forward.

The less time you spend with some people the better off you're going to be. Some people are dream stealers. They'll tell you all the reasons why you can't accomplish your goal, or why you can't get well, or

*Some people are dream stealers.*

how you'll never break the addiction. You don't need that poison in your atmosphere. Don't sit inactive with people who don't believe in you, with people who don't come into agreement with your dream.

## You Need Some Eagles

When we were trying to acquire the Compaq Center, we first met with a group of attorneys. One of those attorneys said, "Joel, I'll help you, but I don't think you'll get it. It's too big a battle. The city is not going to sell it to a church." That went in one ear and out the other. He might as well have been talking to the wall. I thought, *Sorry, doubt. You're not welcome here. Sorry, limited thinking. You don't belong in this atmosphere. You don't know who my God is. I'm staying full of faith, full of hope, full of expectancy.* After we left that meeting, I told our staff that I didn't want that man on our team. He was experienced, respected, and knowledgeable, but if someone is not for you, if you have to talk them into what God put in your heart, you don't need them. Don't let them poison your spirit and convince you that you can't accomplish your dream. Rule your atmosphere.

Get rid of the naysayers. Quit spending time with people who don't see your greatness, who don't value what you have to offer, and who don't recognize the calling on your life. I've learned that if you get rid of the wrong people, God will bring you the right people. He'll bring divine connections, people who will come into agreement with you, people who will thrust you forward and help you reach your destiny.

The only thing that's holding some people back is who they're spending time with. Life is too short for you to spend with negative, can't-do-it, jealous, critical, small-minded people. You need some eagles in your life. You need some people who soar, people who are doing great things, people who have a great attitude. But here's the key: You can't soar with the eagles if you're hanging around with the chickens. Chickens are people who have their heads down, focused on the ground, focused on what they can't do. "This problem is too big." You can't reach new levels hanging out with turkeys, with people who compromise, who take the easy way out, who are mediocre. You won't see your greatness hanging around with crows, with people who complain,

*You can't soar with the eagles if you're hanging around with the chickens.*

who find fault, who always see the worst. You're an eagle. God created you to soar. Now you need to associate with other eagles, with people who inspire you to rise higher, not with people who drag you down.

When you're around certain people, they drain all your energy. They're always having a problem, telling you what's wrong and how bad life is. They're energy suckers. When you leave them, you feel as though you just ran a marathon. You can't take that in on a regular basis and reach your potential. Yes, it's fine to help and to encourage them, but if you're doing all the giving and never receiving, that's out of balance. You need someone who encourages you, someone who speaks life into you. Don't sit inactive around people who you know are limiting you, who are not bringing the best out of you. "Joel, if I don't hang around them, I won't have any friends. I'll be lonely." You may be lonely for a season, but God will bring you new friends, better friends, friends who push you up and do not tear you down.

## Rule Your Atmosphere

In Psalm 59, David was on the run from King Saul, hiding in the desert. He had been good to Saul, but