



## Introduction

Over 100 years ago, author James Allen wrote in *As a Man Thinketh* that people often revolt against an effect in the outer circumstances of their life, while at the same time *internally nourishing and preserving the cause*. In more modern language, not only do people complain about things and take no action to address their complaints...they often fail to realize their problems are self-induced and self-nurtured! To quote James Allen directly, "Men are anxious to improve their circumstances, but are unwilling to improve themselves. They must therefore remain bound. The man who does not shrink from self-crucifixion can never fail to accomplish the object upon which his heart is set."

Here are some common, modern-day complaints that might have amused James Allen:

- "I don't have enough time to get it all done!"
- "I'm too busy!"
- "My office is a mess!"
- "My life is a mess!"
- "I get too many e-mails every day!"
- "My day is full of interruptions!"

- “I can’t stay focused on anything!”
- “I can’t seem to say no to people!”
- “I can’t seem to stop procrastinating!”
- “I waste too much time in meetings!”

The list goes on and on...and life for these people continues to be a whirling dervish devoid of productive activity, closure, joy, serenity and peace of mind.

It is interesting that a man who lived over 100 years ago so accurately described what is still going on in the lives of so many people. It is also interesting that he so accurately articulated the first step for people who want to live a centered, grounded, productive life. According to Allen, you can easily find the threshold to a joyful, productive life path if you simply refuse to “shrink from self-crucifixion.” Once again in more modern terms, we must learn to face reality and seriously evaluate *our role* in nourishing and preserving the very circumstances we often find so disorienting.

The authors of *Exploring Productivity* were asked to share their best ideas with you in this book. However, in order to get the most out of this book, their collective advice is to encourage you to explore the possibility that *you* – and not a variety of mysterious, unseen external forces – are responsible for any less than desirable circumstances in your life. If you genuinely desire to eliminate disorganization in your life and embark on a more joyful and productive life path, taking personal responsibility seems to make all the difference in the world.

*“They themselves are the makers of themselves.*

– James Allen