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Evaluating Your Associations

Never Underestimate the power of influence

by **Jim Rohn**

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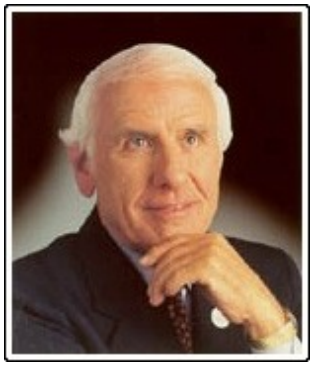


If you were to evaluate the major influences in your life that have shaped the kind of person you are, this has to be high on the list: the people and thoughts you choose to allow into your life. Mr. Shoaff gave me a very important warning in those early days that I would like to share with you. He said,

"Never underestimate the power of influence."

Indeed, the influence of those around us is so powerful! Many times we don't even realize we're being strongly affected because influences generally develop over an extended period of time.

Peer pressure is an especially powerful force because it is so subtle. If you're around people who spend all they make, chances are excellent that you'll spend all you make. If you are around people who go to more ball games than concerts, chances are excellent that you'll do the same thing. If you are around people who don't read, chances are excellent that you won't read. People can keep nudging us off course a little at a time until finally, we find ourselves asking, "How did I get here?" Those subtle influences need to be studied carefully if we really want our lives to turn out the way we've planned.

With regard to this important point, let me give you three key questions to ask yourself. They may help you to make better analysis of your current associations.

Here is the first question: **"Who am I around?"** Make a mental note of the people with whom you most often associate. You've got to evaluate everybody who is able to influence you in any way.

The second question is: **"What are these associations doing to me?"** That's a major question to ask. What have they got me doing? What have they got me listening to? What have they got me reading? Where have they got me going? What do they have me thinking? How have they got me talking? How have they got me feeling? What have they got me saying? You've got to make a serious study of how others are influencing you, both negatively and positively.

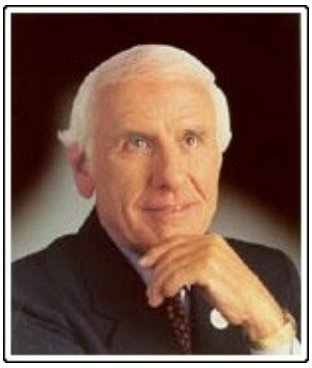
Here's a final question: **"Is that okay?"** Maybe everyone you associate with has been a positive, energizing influence. Then again, maybe there are some bad apples in the bunch. All I'm suggesting here is that you take a close and objective look.

> **Everything is worth a second look, especially the power of influence. Both will take you somewhere, but only one will take you in the direction you need to go.**

It's easy to just dismiss the things that influence our lives. One man say's, "I live here, but I don't think it matters. I'm around these people, but I don't think it hurts." I would take another look at that. Remember, everything matters! Sure, some things matter more than others, but everything amounts to something. You've got to keep checking to find out whether your associations are tipping the scales toward the positive or toward the negative Ignorance is never the best policy. Finding out is the best policy.

Perhaps you've heard the story of the little bird. He had his wing over his eye and he was crying. The owl said to the bird, "You are crying." "Yes," said the little bird, and he pulled his wing away from his eye. "Oh, I see," said the owl. "You're crying because the big bird pecked out your eye." And the little bird said, "No, I'm not crying because the big bird pecked out my eye. I'm crying because I let him."

It's easy to let influence shape our lives, to let associations determine our direction, to let pressures overwhelm us, and to let tides take us. The big question is, are we letting ourselves become what we wish to become?



Jim Rohn is considered to be "America's Foremost Business Philosopher". He's been delivering his life and work-changing seminars for over 39 years... addressed over 6,000 audiences and four million people worldwide... he's the recipient of the 1985 National Speakers Association CPAE Award... authored 17 different books, audio and video programs... and, Mr. Rohn is internationally hailed as one of the most influential thinkers of our time.

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