

# Invest in Yourself

*By Roy Bardowell, CDDC*

The first time I told someone to invest in themselves, the guy said, “what does that mean?” Unfortunately, there is not one answer because it means something different for each person.

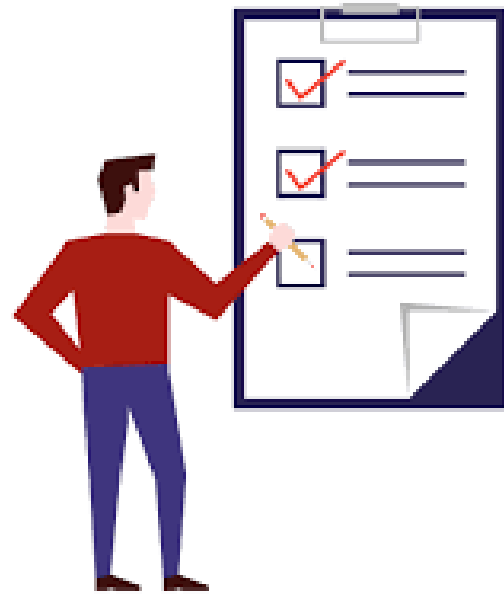
Simpler said, investing in yourself can be seen as self-improvement. I don't care who you are. We all have faults and can be better people, be better employees, be better parents, the best spouse. or be a great service person.

To me it means recognizing the weaknesses in my career, where I am lacking and to not repeat any mistakes, I have made in my last 50 years. Some people think I am a genius, but believe me—I have made a bundle of big mistakes in my life. Making sure I have learned from my mistakes, so I will not repeat them again is considered as self-improvement.

Then you must take the needed time and steps to better yourself. Myself, I have recognized my weaknesses, physical and mental, and I am improving every month. Don't try and overload yourself with impossible goals, or you will disappoint yourself.

I started out by creating a list of things I wanted to accomplish in my life, but my physical impairments keep blocking my way. Now at 67 years old, I have had to consider my mortality and other unpleasant prospects. No matter what I do, there is no way around this. The hardest thing I have had to admit is— I am a **Disabled Senior**

**Citizen** now! Still, I try to avoid the inevitable hoping for a break-through.



**Listing your weaknesses is not something everyone likes to do because it exposes their weaknesses or vulnerabilities.**

You don't need to list all your weaknesses. Just those you want to address in the short term. Keep your list small. Even so if you can do it, you can build a path to success by making changes in your lifestyle and goals. If you find yourself lacking in a certain area, then attend training sessions on the subject whenever possible.

The annual IDA expo presents up to 50 different training sessions, which are all designed to help you learn more in our industry fields. Don't be afraid to attend these IDA/IDEA seminars. Everyone who attends is looking to gain more knowledge, so you will be among equals and others just

like yourself. Go to the Dale Carnegie School of Success website. They offer free online webinars that can help you find direction. While working on a project in Pennsylvania, I attended the full course in Wilkes-Barre/Scranton. It was like having a session with Tony Robbins. It is a great course if you need motivation. Everyone who attended the session leaves there with a smile. You get all the great pointers on what you need to start your day and enjoy it.

My passion for door and gate operators drove me to dabble in the many facets of our industry, and studying ways to make our products better. This provided me a more rounded aspect of our industry, but on the downside, I had to come to terms with the faults in our products. Every day, I find a flaw in our products and the way they function. Unfortunately, many industry products are copies of others, which amplifies the flaws. Chinese knock-offs are the best example of poor copies. I have seen some Chinese knock-offs where they even copied the mistakes.

Another way to look at it is to try and imagine yourself in 1, 3, 5, or 10 years from now. I believe I have achieved what I wanted to learn in our industry, so on the cognitive side of things, I reached my goal. Speaking from experience I can honestly say, "it's not an easy task." It seems like I have been changing my lifestyle and goals my whole life.

**Game-Changer:** Weeks after my 60<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2014. I suffered a massive stroke that resulted in me being paralyzed on my left side. I can't think of a more drastic game changer than waking up one day after a 111-day coma and finding out you can no longer move and are deemed a vegetable. For the first couple of weeks, I could only stare at the

ceiling and I communicated with an eye code suggested by the therapists. Blink once for yes and twice for no. This works although it is tiring and demeaning. People ask me what's it like when you discover you're paralyzed. I can say this—it's HORRIBLE! But this is an understatement for sure. There really are no words to describe this horrible condition. You can lie there saying "why me" and feeling sorry for yourself," which I did for many months OR you can reinvent yourself by forcing yourself to move a little more each day. I remember telling my son; Roy III, after I fall asleep, wrap a towel around my neck and choke me to death. Six years later, I'm glad he didn't follow through, I now know I have more time on Earth and want to do more things before calling it quits and settling down in a box or urn. Following through with your ambitions and dreams is definitely good personal therapy and an investment in yourself and your future.

From my many seminars, I discovered a constant truth. Many people I have met are uncertain of their abilities and lack confidence that prevents them from moving forward. I believe a leap of Faith is not something everyone is comfortable with because they may lack the necessary confidence.

Even-so, you must push yourself forward. Every accomplishment will build more confidence and will give you the mental tools to move yourself onto your ultimate goals.

For me--A ¼ inch of any new movement is a victory. It will however be a long road before I can say, "I'm back to normal". Recently a neurologist told me, "Roy—some people never fully recover." Hearing that can wreck your day—BIG TIME! I know I will one day walk again because I'm almost there now,

however getting the use of my left arm, hand, and fingers may take the rest of my life. It would suck dying the day after fully recovering. This possibility is always working on me to ruin my day.



Fighting paralysis is my biggest challenge to date. In 1969, I survived a Lightning strike and that was touch and go, but I fully recovered from extensive burns and fear of being outside during a storm. So, I thought being paralyzed would be easy to overcome. How wrong I was, still haunts me.

Realizing your limitations is one example of investing in myself. Like I said earlier everyone's is different. It is important to take a long look in the mirror and critique yourself. Once you discover your weaknesses, you can start taking steps to be better. For me there was only one choice. Be a vegetable stuck in bed or finding a way to reinvent myself into something better. The idea of being fed through an IV for the next 5 years, and never tasting a T-Bone Steak again was enough to get me back on my feet. In my case reinventing myself is not completed and could be another 10-year work in progress.

One of my first outings from the hospital was in September, 2015 and took me to the

CODA garage door show in Temecula, California where I spoke with Mr. Todd Thomas. Mr. Todd Thomas is my good friend from many years back and he was the managing director of the IDA at the time. We spoke in depth on how I could help our industry. Suddenly, I had the feeling of self-worth which I hadn't felt in the last 18 months. Todd asked me to do a training workshop at the next IDA EXPO in 2016 at Indianapolis. Wanting to return to something normal, I happily agreed and immediately started to prepare for the seminar.



When Todd Thomas told me there was an opening for me to speak, and I went all in and pushed myself like never before. I really wanted to walk to the stage and climb the stairs to my table, which would have been too much at the time. I didn't want to risk another impairment on top of all my others with a hard fall, which happened in 2017 when I fell on our concrete patio. The fall shattered my femur and I had to have a titanium replacement. All my progress was shot to hell and I had to start over again.

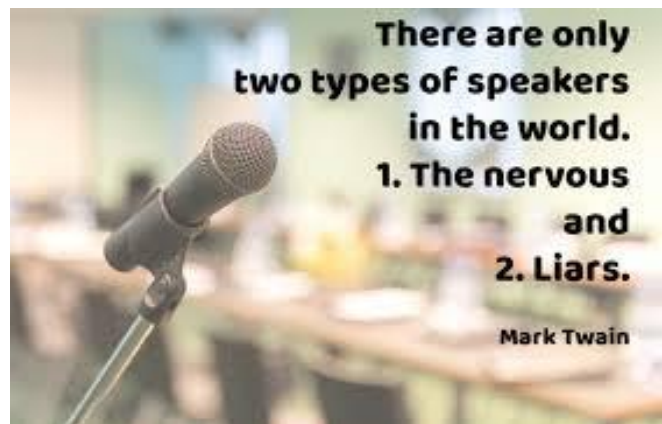
As a child, I stuttered and even today I must stay focused not to fall back into that demeaning routine. The one thing I didn't need was another kind of speech impairment. I still fear regressing even

though I haven't stuttered in 30 years. Speaking again at Expo would definitely be a challenge and I recognized this as a weakness I had to strengthen. There are exercises to help you pronounce words better and with more clarity—I have tried them all. Still, doing something new is still the best way to learn and grow. Speaking well and being told the seminar was great gave me back my confidence which I no longer could rely on. Speaking again with confidence is an investment in myself. I still have many weaknesses and faults which are mostly physical. Remember every investment you embark on will make you a better person. Now, who wouldn't want that?

You must give yourself all the time needed to improve yourself. I have had to recognize my condition will take a long time to recover from and could take the rest of my life before seeing real normalcy. I could die before ever walking again. That is a horrible thought, but these thoughts are what it takes to move your ass. Before the stroke I was eager and ready to climb a ladder and repair any door operator. I liked the work because I learned something new on every job and knew I could add the data learned to one of my seminars.

Learning & growing your knowledge is the greatest example of investing in yourself. You may want to go back to school and get the degree you have desired. I even prepared a brand-new PowerPoint Presentation for the "STEPPING UP TO CDO's" seminar which showed techs how to transition from Residential to Commercial door service. At this time, I had just began communicating by mouth again. My family members who had endured months of my mumbling were worried I no longer had the

communication skills to speak in public, and they were very concerned. When my wife found out my seminar would be two hours, she said call them back and change it to 30 minutes, however the 2-hour time was set by me from previous seminars. Anyone who knows me is perfectly aware I can't explain anything in 30 minutes. On the contrary I have given two 3-1/2-hour seminars back-to-back when I had to break up a 7-hour session. I don't do that anymore because it is too long for people to listen for 2 or more hours. Besides, when you speak too long it tires your vocal cords and the next day you may lose your voice.



The day for my seminar came very fast. When my son; Roy pushed me to the ballroom door and I saw the sign, "Speaker—Roy Bardowell; I had an immediate anxiety attack and thought I was going to have a heart attack any second.

When you come out of a coma and realize your disabled, everything makes you nervous. After taking a few deep breaths, I settled down. I had to remind myself I had done this before, so it's business as usual. Sitting in the front row were Merlin Thereur and Kyle Hart; two of our best operator technicians, so I figured if I got stuck on something, I could rely on one of these guys to help me through it. IDA was very

accommodating by having the Convention Center provide a long ramp so I could be rolled up on stage. I didn't move around like my usual presentations and stayed in my wheel chair for the entire duration. It worked out fine for everyone.

The best form of self-improvement I know of is when a person kicks an addiction. This includes heavy alcohol consumption and usage, which is very popular in our industry. There is an epidemic of addictions in our society and I implore anyone who recognizes they have an addiction to seek help and kick the substance out of your body. Believe me, you will be a better person by going straight! Not to mention that most addictions are expensive and will save you money if you kick the habit. NOW! That's investing in yourself!

## NOW GO GET EM!

I enjoy making myself a resource for anyone who would like to speak with me. I welcome everyone! Any topic s fine by me.

My email: [roythedoorman@gmail.com](mailto:roythedoorman@gmail.com) or my cell (480)543-0620

Please reach out. I would love to hear from you.

Anytime I talk shop to door people it makes me feel reborn again.

*Roy Bardowell, CDDC, served as Operations Manager at Guardian Access & Door Hardware until 2014. He has been in the door and operator industry since 1973 and is known as one of the industry's most experienced operator technicians and trainers. Roy received the IDEA Commitment to Excellence award in 2008 and IDA's Jerry R. Reynolds Volunteer Service Award in 2017. Contact him at [roythedoorman@gmail.com](mailto:roythedoorman@gmail.com)*