Career

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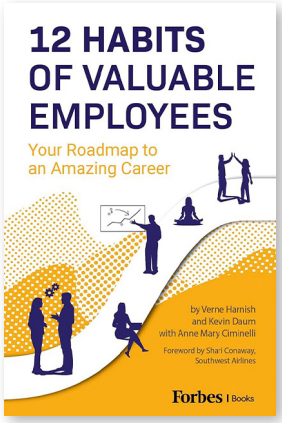
12 Habits of Valuable Employees

Verne harnish, Kevin Daum

Executive Book Summaries®

12 Habits Of Valuable Employees

Your Roadmap to an Amazing Career



by **Verne Harnish, Kevin Daum, & Anne Mary Ciminelli**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

What does it take to become the most valuable employee an organization has ever had, securing stability and growth opportunities? Is it that difficult to get noticed and recognized for all the contributions you've made, helping the organization move forward?

12 Habits Of Valuable Employees: Your Roadmap to an Amazing Career is the resource you can use to successfully answer all these pressing questions. Focusing on simple daily practices and real-life examples of valuable performance, the book sheds light on the details that set some employees apart and play a determining role in their career growth.

Bestselling authors Verne Harnish, Kevin Daum, and Anne Mary Ciminelli surveyed hundreds of employers to document their thoughts about truly valuable employees and what differentiates these professionals from merely adequate ones. Based on that research, they synthesized the 12 habits that the most valuable employees use to enjoy amazing careers and fulfillment at work.

IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY:

- Simple daily practices that allow for effortless workplace skill acquisition
- How really valuable employees are different from adequate workers
- The top habits valuable employees have and how to practice those in your everyday work settings
- What employers can do to inspire learning and outstanding performance among their employees

Introduction

What inspires people to grow, to push harder, to help a company reach the next level? What is it that makes really valuable employees who never fall into contention and are eager to keep evolving? This book will take you on a journey, helping you discover the answers.

Each chapter provides a story that exemplifies the line between adequate and valuable. We share insights from our work with thousands of leaders and team members. We list daily actions to help you become the most valuable team member possible. Once you truly understand the difference between adequate and valuable, you can build habits that will deliver the latter.

Part I: Will: Habits of Desire

Habit 1: Developing as a Leader

The habits explored in part I require a genuine, heartfelt desire to pursue development in oneself and in company.

Developing as a leader is the first one on the list. Becoming a better leader creates value for the company because:

- You can better lead by example to help those around you become better leaders
- Your consistent, measurable growth practices lay a foundation for progress for the rest of the company
- You help generate an internal pipeline of strong future leaders
- Every employee can start undertaking steps towards building this kind of leadership value today. The most important ones include:
- Learn something: leaders are committed to continuous learning. Mark Zuckerberg, for example, set a goal to read one book every two weeks. Leadership guru Peter Drucker read fiction books to develop savvier people skills.
- Get a peer coach: you need to gain experience and objectivity from those on the same journey as you.
- Be a "multiplier:" some professionals have the power to amplify the results of people around them. Multipliers identify and unlock the innate talents of their colleagues.

Habit 2: Aligning Vision

Setting high goals that are above and beyond expectations is great – but only if those goals fit into the larger plan for company growth.

Aligning your actions to the company's vision creates value for the company because:

- It encourages conversations within and across teams to ensure everyone understands and buys into the goals and plans
- It allows everyone to discern how to expend time and resources to achieve the company's ultimate goal
- It's an opportunity to unlock the skills of teammates, make the sum of the parts greater, and create exponential results

Recognizing strategic opportunities for company improvement takes some effort on behalf of every individual employee. To start the journey, do focus on:

- Absorb the vision: consider your company's BHAG and quarterly properties. Do you know them inside and out? If not, ask the senior leadership team – they will be impressed you're interested.
- Align your priorities: always make sure that what you're working on aligns with the company's overall vision. Question the priorities you've set for yourself. Are you focusing on what's important and not just on what's urgent? If you can't tie an activity back to the company's ultimate goal, you need to reevaluate your actions.
- Enroll your colleagues: are the actions of your colleagues aligned with corporate priorities? Find out whether coworkers have embraced the company's vision as much as you have. If they haven't, help them understand and then reprioritize their own actions.

Habit 3: Enabling Growth

Being popular among a coworker and doing a decent job on a daily basis isn't enough to transform yourself into a valuable employee. To accomplish the goal, you'll have to start adding value beyond taking care of everyday business.

Looking at the company through growth lens requires asking yourself these important questions:

- What is being done consistently poorly, according to our current standards?
- What are the existing processes, procedures, and behaviors in the company that will inhibit future growth and scalability?
- Once you have the answers, you will need to:
- Adopt company growth objectives as your own personal goals

Good senior leaders are watching for employees who can see beyond the here and now.

- Identify and flag systemic issues that could inhibit growth
- Encourage and enable people and systems that support scalability

Unfortunately, many employees still believe thinking about growth is someone else's job. They have their small patch of territory to cultivate, and rarely look over the garden wall. Companies need smart people who make the company's growth their own personal mission. Good senior leaders are watching for employees who can see beyond the here and now. Try one of these methods to advance the company and yourself at the same time:

- Learn the whole business: it's imperative to have good knowledge of how the company works as a whole. Enlist colleagues in other departments and experienced leaders in your own department to show you the big picture so you understand company cycles and how all the moving parts connect.
- Study scalability: There are plenty of books and articles on corporate growth and innovation. Commit time and effort to learning how companies grow and what keeps them from reaching their potential. Books like Jim Collins' Great by Choice provide useful insights. Absorb Verne's tips in Mastering the Rockefeller Habits 20th Anniversary Edition. Hit up your mentors and networks for stories of growth and innovation and become a growth information junkie.
- Create growth committees: you don't have to figure out everything yourself. Enlist other ambitious colleagues in your growth-oriented activities. Within your own team, share some of what you've learned and be a vocal champion of growth so others will make it a regular part of their thinking, too.

Part II: Values: Habits of Character

The habits explored in part II require awareness of the world beyond your cubicle (or video chat screen). They show how you yourself can contribute to a culture of mediocrity and boredom, or one of excitement and success.

As you read the following three habits, consider how ego and insecurities restrict the growth of both the employee and the company. How do these employees inspire others to move beyond acceptable standards and into greatness?

Habit 4: Integrating Core Values and Purpose

Recognizing the importance of core values is vital within any organization. As a valuable employee, you need to be a proactive entity that encourages the company to institute a more robust core value program.

To do so, you'll have to:

- Embody the core values with every decision and action and look for tangible ways of living them
- Recruit others who will elevate the desired culture
- Hold others consistently accountable to the values and communicate with them when you see a particularly good or poor performance

Leaders talk about the importance of living core values. In a practical sense, this means aligning ALL your behaviors and decisions with the core values of the firm. In other words, will the action or decision you're about to take support or violate a core value? Like the rules of any sport, core values play the same role inside an organization. And like with all sports, the umpires and referees are there to make sure the rules are followed.

Therefore, taking it a step further, if you see others violating core values through their behaviors and decisions, will you speak up? If you feel comfortable talking privately with the individual, do so. Otherwise, escalate your concern to their leader. Additionally, if you are watching for core value behavior, you will see those who shine as an example. Call it out so others can learn and encourage all to follow that path.

One of the tenets of core values is that they are "No Matter What!" values. Thus, there are only two types of employees: those who actively live the core values and those who detract from the core values (through behaviors and decisions not in alignment with the core values). Everyone can integrate core values, including employees who don't have

an executive position. Simple everyday steps can be utilized and some of the most effective choices include:

- Identify your company and personal core values: if you don't know your organization's core values – ask! This demonstrates your willingness to be proactive and learn more about the organization. When you have a good understanding, you can easily figure out how the company's core values align with your own personal values.
- Build core value evaluation into your responsibilities: take the organization's list of core values and connect your various responsibilities to a specific value as best you can. Then set measurable performance goals for each. It's not as hard as it sounds. Elicit the help of a leader in the company if you need it. Again, they'll be impressed by your initiative to seek help.
- Enlist others in core value behavior: valuable employees don't act in a vacuum. You are as much responsible for having the right people on the bus as anyone else in the company. Help your colleagues apply the core values in their work and daily behavior.

Habit 5: Managing Conflict

We believe real value happens when the underlying issues that fuel conflicts are not swept aside, but rather are brought to light in a productive way.

So much company time goes to firefighting and reactive attempts to pacify disgruntled staff members. Employees create value when they assess the root cause of problems, find productive ways to air differences, and make systemic changes that eliminate problems completely. Treating only some of the symptoms does not solve the problem.

A systemic, holistic approach to managing conflict involves:

- Committing to respectful honesty and truth-telling in your own interactions
- Encouraging others to speak their minds, while following the rules of civil discourse
- Learning to facilitate discussions where all parties can disagree and debate, and then come to a consensus on the right action steps to take
- Conflict can be either a culture killer or a culture maker. Select one of these three strategies to turn a negative into a positive for the whole company:
- Banish "quiet politeness:" healthy organizations value openness and communication on all levels. Get in the habit of sharing both your ideas and your concerns. Concentrate on writing or saying your thoughts clearly. Avoid prefacing your comments with apologies or other caveats.
- Become an active listener – and teach others: follow active listening rules and make sure you're paying attention to everyone's contributions to a conversation.
- Create an "idea circle:" this type of gathering allows individual team members to communicate a problem or a challenge in an informal way. This can even be done anonymously using cards. Once all of the concerns are read aloud, you can dedicate the next portion of the meeting to discussing viable solutions.

Habit 6: Driving Excellence

Cultivating and maintaining a solid reputation is one of the most important undertakings for a company. When such efforts aren't properly aligned with a corporate vision, however, they become difficult to sustain and turn into a recipe for almost immediate burnout.

Creating content in a reactionary way doesn't help the company build for the future. Instead, the quality quickly falls off and the entire effort becomes a burden to maintain.

To build value within this realm, you'll need to focus on:

- Actions that create opportunities to position the company better in the future
- Systems and processes that help colleagues develop the best work product possible
- Creative thinking and activities to expand competencies

Adequate employees work to improve their own effort. Valuable employees take their new knowledge and spread it systematically throughout the company. You can do the same with one of these strategies:

- Act with the future in mind: always consider the possible implications of the things that you do. Both short-term and long-term thinking are essential to transform yourself into a valuable employee.
- Create templates: find ways of sharing knowledge and helping others put it to good use. If you find a better and more efficient way of doing a task, institutionalize it! Create a template, checklist, workflow, or how-to guide for your fellow employees.
- Engage creative means: focus on innovation and creative problem-solving. Inspire your coworkers to

The valuable employee sees beyond the actions of the day. Rather than falling into the patterns of the way things have always been done, they approach tasks with curiosity.

seek similar approaches and to apply ideas that are outside the box.

Part III: Results: Habits of Performance

The valuable employee sees beyond the actions of the day. Rather than falling into the patterns of the way things have always been done, they approach tasks with curiosity. They seek to improve systems and processes to increase growth and efficiency.

The habits explored in Part III certainly address action and completion, but also support inquiry and process improvement. Together they help you identify patterns of excellence and mediocrity. Once you understand how work processes and productivity happen in real time, you can master both to improve both output and harmony.

Habit 7: Surfacing Issues

Colleagues and clients often admire people who achieve success under pressure. It seems like they are always pulling a rabbit out of their hat at the very last minute to save the day. However, their heroics can cover over the fact that their own behavior caused the need for heroics in the first place.

Effective issue surfacing that focuses on delivering substance and tackling any situation in an optimal way entails:

- Becoming an expert in your line of operation
- Solving problems proactively, even before they've occurred
- Improving the capabilities and reputation of the company

To accomplish these goals and become better at identifying hazards, focus on the following problem-solving strategies.

- Take things apart: learn everything you can about why things are the way they are – formulas, processes, inner company mechanics. Knowing how everything operates will make it much easier for you to determine why breakdowns occur.
- Create a diligence process: build a standard process for preparation, along with a checklist for completion. Actively pursue information through company resources. Ask people in other departments to explain how things work.
- Reduce "division labor:" look for areas where you can reduce the number of people who touch a process. Eliminate as many handoffs as possible to avoid the need for heroics to save the race.

Habit 8: Improving Process

Scalable processes that can be taught, measured, and improved are at the very heart of creating value within the organization.

Developing such processes depends on a couple of key practices:

- Examining each process with a long-term, scalable view
- Establishing metrics that drive efficiency
- Aligning your processes with the company's
- You can begin to improve processes in your company by trying one of the following:
- Meet with your peers cross-functionally: Have lunch each week with someone from another department and explore how you can better support each other in a shared process.
- Establish clear metrics for each process: processes are generally measured three ways – quality, time, and cost. Learn what these are for each of the processes you touch as a part of your job.
- Contribute to process improvement: document each process that is created so others can learn from your successes and mistakes. Find ways to simplify even the complex ones.

Habit 9: Getting Things Done

Getting things done depends on numerous things – from ongoing performance reporting to the provision of effective stimuli that encourage optimal outcomes.

Whether you're a leader or an employee keen on meeting goals, you'll need to focus on the following essentials that create value:

- Help establish and participate in ongoing training for required activities so others aren't negatively impacted by someone who doesn't know what they are doing
- Make sure people have the structure, processes, and tools they need to get things done
- Support meaningful consequences for those who can't make the grade
- Productivity only occurs when people are accountable for the work they take on. You can encourage those around you to step up by:
- Starting with you: you'll first need to focus on evaluating your performance. Identify places where you are unproductive because you are unmotivated, you don't have the structure, or there are no consequences.
- Emphasizing curiosity: encourage examination of processes with a critical eye to identify both inefficiencies and opportunities.
- Setting goals each day and week to exceed them: put some effort into pinpointing team priorities (making adjustments along the way if needed). This should be an approach you use to tackle everyday projects, as well as work processes on a weekly and even more long-term basis.

Part IV: Skills: Habits of Influence

Habit 10: Fostering Communication

A valuable employee takes on the responsibility of understanding where people live and how they communicate. They work to expand beyond the norms of basic thought and practicality to inspire others to break out of existing conventions.

To become a better communicator, you'll need to:

- Craft communication around key takeaways
- Master the various mechanics and styles of business communication
- Create planned messaging campaigns that go beyond a single event or person

To accomplish these goals, experiment with the following steps:

- Focus on the key message: begin with an end goal in mind and design all the communication around this focal point.
- Expand your communication repertoire: writing, public speaking, active participation in online communities – these are just a few of the techniques and communication methodologies you'll need to master.
- Design a campaign in a variety of formats: understand the various formats, the benefits they bring, the audiences that will respond best to each communication approach. Communication is evolving and you'll need to keep yourself educated and informed about the new approaches and possibilities.

Habit 11: Inspiring Creativity

Efficient creativity doesn't just throw everything against the wall to see what sticks. Instead, efficient creativity is tempered by careful research and tapping others' experience.

If you want to create value for your company through a creative approach, do:

- Understand the end goals of the organization before planning any campaign
- Apply creativity in practical and expansive ways
- Actively engage others in the process

If you are hired to be a creative in any organization, you must be prepared to lead others down the creative path toward specific objectives. Valuable employees leverage their skills and interests to grow the company in meaningful ways. You'll need to go beyond your own brain and activity. Dedicate yourself to one of these three methods of driving creativity within yourself and others:

- Establish clear, data-driven goals: don't just ideate. Help the company clearly define its objectives. Then make sure everyone's ideas are focused on the desired outcome.
- Develop a creativity process: creativity rarely comes from the same old routine. You should always be looking for and learning about what is new. Join forums, go to conferences, visit museums! Expose yourself to learning opportunities beyond business and use what you learn to develop new creative processes.
- Surface the creativity around you: you never know where the next great idea will come from. If you want your creative work to be well received and

implemented, help your colleagues understand the creative process. Give them clear points to check in and give feedback. A great creative can identify and share compelling stories that are rooted in the core values of the organization.

Habit 12: Effecting Change

A truly valuable employee and better leader would recognize that someone needs to affect change by convincing the team to follow. For that to happen, a valuable team member will have to make a well-supported argument for his plan that explains exactly how the goal will be achieved and why the team should be involved.

If you want to become that employee, you'll need to:

- Understand the root of the problem and craft an effective solution
- Be able to communicate the mission in a way that gets others excited
- Know how to execute the plan

Valuable employees are able to affect change by communicating their vision, explaining why it is the preferred future, and getting people to back their plan to get there. When you need to affect change, follow this three-step process developed by iconic Zingerman's Deli CEO Ari Weinzweig:

- Write an envisioned future: describe all the details of how things will be better when the change is made.
- Make a list of everyone affected by the change
- Meet with each person and influence them to support the change

Conclusion

Thank you for investing the time and effort to learn about these 12 habits of valuable employees.

The next steps are up to you. Take command of your future. Create real value for your company and advance your career by embracing these 12 habits. And remember to do the job you want next!

The key is one step, one behavior, at a time. Work on one habit/chapter per month, one behavior per week! Mastery is an iterative process.

After you've completed the year-long journey once, repeat it—like accomplished tennis, golf, or pickleball players who go back to the fundamentals with every stroke. You'll find new ways to impact your company's bottom line and your top line. No doubt you'll also gain fans among your colleagues and leaders as you share what you've learned.



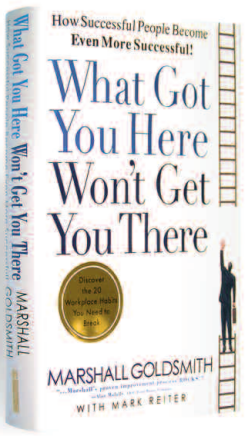
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SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®



By Marshall Goldsmith with Mark Reiter

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How Successful People Become Even More Successful

WHAT GOT YOU HERE WON'T GET YOU THERE

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

In this book, Marshall Goldsmith begins by examining the trouble with success, explaining how previous accomplishments often prevent leaders from gaining more success. He analyzes why high achievers are so resistant to change due to their delusion of success, pointing out that they can't see that what got them here won't get them there.

These are people who do one annoying thing repeatedly on the job and don't realize that this small flaw may sabotage their otherwise golden career. Worse yet, they do not realize that it's happening and that they can fix it. Goldsmith details the 20 habits that hold you back from the top rung of the corporate ladder. In his experience, these are the most irritating interpersonal issues in the workplace. For each habit, he gives examples and practical solutions you can implement. He then describes the 21st habit, which stands separate from the other 20 habits — not because it is a flaw, but because it is often the root of an annoying behavior.

Finally, Goldsmith addresses the problem of how you can change your interpersonal relationships for the better, and ensure that you make your behavioral changes permanent.

This summary reveals how you can identify which of these 20 habits apply to you, and how to choose the one or two you should focus on.

In addition, you will learn:

- ✓ ***The four key beliefs that make you successful but also resistant to change.***
- ✓ ***Why the higher you go, the more your problems are behavioral.***
- ✓ ***Why the 21st habit, goal obsession, may be the most destructive of all.***
- ✓ ***How to get good 360-degree feedback from your colleagues on your own.***
- ✓ ***How to overcome special challenges if you're the one in charge at the workplace.***

Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries, P.O. Box 1053, Concordville, PA 19331 USA
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WHAT GOT YOU HERE WON'T GET YOU THERE

by Marshall Goldsmith with Mark Reiter

— THE *COMPLETE* SUMMARY

PART I – THE TROUBLE WITH SUCCESS

You Are Here

You know those maps in shopping malls that say, "You Are Here"? They exist to orient you in unfamiliar territory, to tell you where you are, where you want to go and how to get there. A few people never need these maps. They're blessed with an internal compass that orients them automatically.

Some people go through life with this unerring sense of direction — it guides them through their school years, careers, marriages and friendships. When we meet people like this, we say they're grounded. They know who they are and where they're going.

In the arc of what can be a long and successful career, you will always be in transit from "here" to "there." Here can be a great place. If you're successful, here is exactly the kind of place you want to be. But here is also a place where you can be a success in spite of some gaps in your behavior or personal makeup.

That's why you want to go "there." There can be a better place, where you can be a CEO who is viewed as a great leader because he doesn't get in the way of his people. You are here. You can get there. But you have to understand that what got you here won't get you there. ■

The Success Delusion, or Why We Resist Change

In the workplace, many of us overestimate our contribution to a project, have an elevated opinion of our professional skills and standing among our peers, and take credit — partial or complete — for successes that truly belong to others.

We also conveniently ignore the costly failures and time-consuming dead ends we have created, while exaggerating our projects' impact on net profits because we discount the real and hidden costs built into them (costs are someone else's problems; success is ours).

All of these delusions are the result of success, not failure. That's because we get positive reinforcement from our past successes and think that type of validation is predictive of great things in our future. But our delusions become a serious liability when we need to change and someone tries to make us change.

First, we tend to think the other party is confused. Second, we go into denial. The criticism does not apply to us, or we wouldn't be so successful. When all else fails, we discredit the messenger: "Why is a smart guy like me listening to a loser like you?"

Couple these with the positive interpretations successful people assign to their past performance — their ability to influence their success, their belief that their success will continue in the future and their sense of control over their own destiny — and you have a volatile cocktail of resistance to change.

The Four Key Beliefs of Successful People

There are four key beliefs that help you become successful. However, each can make it rough for you to change.

1. I Have Succeeded. To successful people, the past is always the prologue — and always rose-colored. This belief only becomes an obstacle when behavioral change is needed.

(continued on page 3)

The authors: Dr. Marshall Goldsmith is a renowned expert in helping business leaders achieve measurable change in themselves, their people and their teams. In addition to founding Marshall Goldsmith Partners LLC, he serves as University Professor at Alliant University's Marshall Goldsmith School of Management, named in his honor in 2006.

Mark Reiter, a literary agent based in Bronxville, N.Y., has collaborated on 13 previous books.

From the book *What Got You Here Won't Get You There* by Marshall Goldsmith with Mark Reiter.
Copyright © 2007 Marshall Goldsmith. Summarized by permission of the publisher, Hyperion. Available wherever books are sold. 236 pages. $23.95.
ISBN 1-4013-0130-4.

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Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries (ISSN 0747-2196), P.O. Box 1053, Concordville, PA 19331 USA, a division of Concentrated Knowledge Corp. Published monthly. Subscriptions: $209 per year in the United States, Canada and Mexico, and $295 to all other countries. Periodicals postage paid at Concordville, Pa., and additional offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Soundview, P.O. Box 1053, Concordville, PA 19331. Copyright © 2007 by Soundview Executive Book Summaries.

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The Success Delusion, or Why We Resist Change

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2. I Can Succeed. Successful people believe they have the capability within themselves to make desirable things happen — through sheer force of personality, talent or brainpower, they can steer a situation in their direction.

3. I Will Succeed. Successful people have unflappable optimism. But it can easily mutate into excessive optimism. It explains why successful people tend to be extremely busy and face the danger of overcommitment. When the "do-nothings" are asked, "Why didn't you implement the behavioral change you said you would?" the most common response is, "I meant to, but I just didn't have time."

4. I Choose to Succeed. Successful people believe they are doing what they choose to do, because they choose to do it. Unfortunately, the more you believe your behavior is a result of your own choices and commitments, the less likely you are to want to change your behavior.

We All Obey Natural Law

The main natural law that has been witnessed while observing successful people's efforts to become more successful is: *People will do something — including changing their behavior — only if it can be demonstrated that doing so is in their own best interests as defined by their own values.* This is natural law. Every choice, big or small, is a risk-reward decision where your bottom-line thinking is, "What's in it for me?"

Most people's resistance to change can be overcome by invoking natural law. Everyone, even the biggest ego in the room, has a hot button that can be pushed — and that button is self-interest. It usually boils down to four items that are the standard payoff for success: money, power, status and popularity. ■

PART II – THE 20 HABITS THAT HOLD YOU BACK FROM THE TOP

The 20 Habits

When was the last retreat or training session at your organization titled, "Stupid Things Our Top People Do that We Need to Stop Doing Now"? Can you imagine your CEO (or immediate supervisor) admitting a personal failing in public and outlining his or her efforts to stop doing it? Probably not. Instead of your usual "To Do" list, start your "To Stop" list.

What's Wrong with Us?

The most common faults are a very specific breed of flaws. What we're dealing with are challenges in interpersonal behavior, often leadership behavior. They are the everyday annoyances that make your workplace more noxious than it needs to be. They are transactional flaws performed by one person against another.

These faults are simple to correct For example, the cure for not thanking others enough is remembering to say "Thank you." For punishing the messenger, it's imagining how we'd like to be treated under similar circumstances. Check yourself against the list, then whittle it down to one or two vital issues, and you'll know where to start.

Habit No. 1: Winning Too Much

This is the most common behavioral problem in successful people. There's a fine line between being competitive and overcompetitive, between winning when it counts and when no one's counting — and successful people cross that line with alarming frequency.

Winning too much is the No. 1 challenge because it underlies nearly every other behavioral problem. If we argue too much, it's because we want our view to prevail. If we put down other people, it's our stealthy way of positioning them beneath us. If we ignore people, again it's about winning — by making them fade away. If you've achieved any modicum of success, you're guilty of this every day.

Habit No. 2: Adding Too Much Value

It is extremely difficult for successful people to listen to other people tell them something they already know without communicating somehow that "We already knew that" and "We know a better way."

The higher up you go, the more you need to make other people winners and not make it about winning yourself. This means closely monitoring how you hand out encouragement. If you find yourself saying, "Great idea," then dropping the other shoe with a "but" or "however," try cutting your response off at "idea." Even better, take a breath before you speak and ask yourself if what you're about to say is worth it.

Habit No. 3: Passing Judgment

There's nothing wrong with offering an opinion in the normal give-and-take of business discussions. But it's not appropriate to pass judgment when we specifically ask people to voice their opinions about us.

Try this: For one week treat every idea that comes your way from another person with complete neutrality. Don't take sides. Don't express an opinion. If you find yourself incapable of just saying "Thank you," make it an innocuous "Thanks, I hadn't considered that" or "Thanks, you've given me something to think about." You will significantly reduce the number of pointless arguments at work or home. If you continue this for several weeks, at least three good things will happen:

1. This sort of neutral response will become automatic.

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The 20 Habits

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2. You will dramatically reduce the hours you devote to contentious interfacing. When you don't judge an idea, no one can argue with you.

3. People will gradually begin to see you as a much more agreeable person, even when you are not agreeing with them. Do this consistently and people will eventually brand you as a welcoming person, someone whose door they can knock on when they have an idea.

Habit No. 4: Making Destructive Comments

These are the cutting sarcastic remarks that run the gamut from a thoughtless jab in a meeting to comments about how someone looks — "Nice tie" (with a smirk) — to elaborately planned critiques of people's past performances that everyone but you have forgotten ("Do you remember the time you …").

Before speaking, ask yourself:

1. Will this comment help our customers?
2. Will this comment help our company?
3. Will this comment help the person I'm talking to?
4. Will this comment help the person I'm talking about?

Habit No. 5: Starting with 'No,' 'But' or 'However'

When you start a sentence with any of these words or a variation thereof, no matter how friendly your tone or how many mollifying phrases you throw in to acknowledge the other person's feelings, the message to the other person is: *You are wrong.*

Stop trying to defend your position and start monitoring how many times you begin remarks with those three words. Pay special attention to moments when you use these words in a sentence whose ostensible purpose is to agree with what the other person is saying, for example, "That's true, however, …" (meaning: You don't think it's true) or the very common opener, "Yes, but … " (meaning: Prepare to be contradicted).

Habit No. 6: Telling the World How Smart We Are

This is another variation on our need to win. We need to be the smartest person in the room, but it usually backfires. We do it when we agree with someone offering us practical advice, whenever we nod our heads impatiently while people are talking, when we drum our fingers on the table. We do it more overtly when we tell someone, "I already knew that" or alternative phrasings such as, "I didn't need to hear that," or "I'm five steps ahead of you." We're insulting the other person.

Stopping this behavior is not hard. Try this three-step drill:

1. Pause before you open your mouth to ask yourself, "Is anything I say worth it?"
2. Conclude that it isn't.
3. Say "Thank you."

Habit No. 7: Speaking When Angry

When you get angry, you are usually out of control. It's hard to lead people this way. The worst thing about anger is how it stifles our ability to change. Once you get a reputation for emotional volatility, you are branded for life. Pretty soon that is all people know about you. To lose your reputation as a person who gets angry, just follow one simple piece of advice: *If you keep your mouth shut, no one can ever know how you really feel.*

Habit No. 8: Negativity, or 'Let Me Explain Why that Won't Work'

We all know negative people in the workplace. They're incapable of saying something positive or complimentary to any of your suggestions. You could walk into the office with a cure for cancer and the first words out of their mouths would be, "Let me explain why that won't work."

That is the telltale phrase of negativity. It's a major annoyance because it's emblematic of our need to share our negative thoughts even when they haven't been solicited. It is pure, unadulterated negativity under the guise of being helpful.

If you catch yourself saying this frequently, you know what needs fixing. Seeing how people relate to you provides proof that your flaw is serious, it matters to people and it's a problem.

Habit No. 9: Withholding Information

In the age of knowledge workers, information is power. Intentionally withholding information is the opposite of adding value. Yet it has the same purpose — to gain power. Reflect how you feel about these events:

- A meeting you weren't told about.
- A memo or e-mail you weren't copied on.
- A moment when you were the last person to learn something.

Not sharing information rarely achieves the desired effect. In order to have power, you need to inspire loyalty rather than fear and suspicion. Here are the unintentional or accidental ways you can withhold information:

- Being too busy to get back to someone with valuable information.
- Forgetting to include someone in your discussions or meetings.
- Delegating a task to a subordinate, but not taking the time to show them how to get it done.

So how do you stop withholding information? Start sharing it.

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The 20 Habits

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Habit No. 10: Failing to Give Proper Recognition

This is a sibling of withholding information. In withholding recognition of another person's contribution to a team's success, you are not only sowing injustice and treating people unfairly, but also depriving people of the emotional payoff that comes with success. They feel forgotten, ignored and pushed to the side.

Habit No. 11: Claiming Credit that We Don't Deserve

When someone steals the credit for a success you created, they're committing the most rage-inducing interpersonal "crime" in the workplace. It creates a bitterness that's hard to forget. You can forgive someone for not recognizing your stellar performance. You can't forgive that person for recognizing it and brazenly claiming it as his or her own.

The best way to stop being a credit hog is to do the opposite — share the wealth. Here's a simple drill:

For one day (or longer) make a mental note of every time you privately congratulate yourself on an achievement, large or small. Then write it down. You'll find you pat yourself on the back more often than you think.

Once you've assembled the list, ask yourself if it's *in any way possible* that someone else might deserve the credit. For example, if you showed up on time for a meeting, is it because you are punctual and thoughtful? Or because your assistant hounded you about the meeting, chased you off a phone call and made sure you were out the door to get there in time?

As you go through your list, consider this make-or-break-question: If any of the other people involved in your episodes were looking at the situation, would they give you as much credit as you are claiming for yourself? Or would they hand it to someone else, perhaps even themselves?

Habit No. 12: Making Excuses

You can divide excuses into two categories: blunt and subtle. Blunt excuses sound like: "I'm sorry I missed our lunch date. My assistant marked it down for the wrong day on my calendar." However, the message is: "See, it's not that I forgot the lunch date. It's not that I don't regard you as important. It's that my assistant is inept. Blame my assistant, not me."

The problem with this type of excuse is that we rarely get away with it — and it's hardly effective leadership strategy.

The more subtle excuses appear when we attribute our failings to some inherited DNA: "I'm impatient" or "I am horrendous at time management. I guess that's just the way I am." The next time you hear yourself saying, "I'm just not good at …" ask yourself, "Why not?"

Four Steps to Positive Recognition

1. Make a list of all the important groups of people in your life.
2. Write down the name of every important person in each group.
3. Twice a week, review the list of names and ask, "Did someone on this page do something that I should recognize?"
4. If the answer is yes, give quick recognition, either by phone, e-mail, voice mail or a note. If the answer is no, do nothing.

Within a year, your reputation for providing positive recognition can improve from poor to excellent.

Habit No. 13: Clinging to the Past

People who cling to the past — who want to understand why they are the way they are — can't change the past, rewrite it or make excuses for it. All they can do is accept it and move on.

But for some reason, many people enjoy living in the past, especially if going back there lets them blame someone else for anything that's gone wrong in their lives. That's when clinging to the past becomes an interpersonal problem. We use the past as a weapon against others. We also use the past as a way of contrasting it with the present — usually to highlight something positive about ourselves at the expense of someone else, for example, "When I was your age …"

Habit No. 14: Playing Favorites

If we aren't careful, we can end up treating people at work like dogs — rewarding those who heap unthinking, unconditional admiration on us.

The net result is obvious: You're encouraging behavior that serves you, but not necessarily in the best interest of the company. If everyone is fawning over the boss, who's getting the work done? Worse, it tilts the field against honest, principled employees who won't play along. This is a double hit of bad news. You're not only playing favorites but favoring the wrong people!

For information on how to stop playing favorites, go to: http://my.summary.com

Habit No. 15: Refusing to Express Regret

Whatever the reason, refusing to apologize causes as much ill will in the workplace as any other interpersonal flaw. People who can't apologize might as well wear a T-shirt that says, "I don't care about you." The irony is that all the fears that lead us to resist apologizing are

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The 20 Habits

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actually erased by an apology. When you tell someone "I'm sorry," you turn people into your allies.

The best thing about apologizing is that it forces everyone to let go of the past. When you employ it on co-workers it can have a great effect on how they feel about you and themselves.

Habit No. 16: Not Listening

People will tolerate all sorts of rudeness, but the inability to pay attention holds a special place in their hearts. When you're not listening you're sending out an armada of negative messages. The reality for leaders of the past and leaders in the future is that *in the past, very bright people would put up with disrespectful behavior, but in the future they will leave!*

Habit No. 17: Failing to Express Gratitude

Often, the two sweetest words in the English language are "Thank you." Although there's no art to saying it, people have a tough time executing this rudimentary maneuver.

If you don't know what to say, your default response to any suggestion should be "Thank you." Almost any response other than this has the potential to stir up trouble. Intentionally or not, you appear as if you are attacking the person talking to you.

Habit No. 18: Punishing the Messenger

Punishing the messenger is not merely the unjust retaliatory action we take against a whistle-blower or the angry tirade we heap on an employee who tells us something we don't enjoy hearing. It's also the small responses we make throughout the day whenever we are inconvenienced or disappointed.

It's the expletive you neglect to delete in a meeting when a subordinate announces a deal fell apart. If you had calmly asked, "What went wrong?" no damage would be done. The subordinate would explain and everyone in the room would be wiser for it.

However, the flash of temper sends a different signal. It says: "If you want to tick off the boss, surprise him or her with bad news." To stop this bad habit, all you need to say is "Thank you."

Habit No. 19: Passing the Buck

This is the behavioral flaw by which we judge leaders. A leader who cannot shoulder the blame is not someone we will follow blindly into battle. Passing the buck is the dark flip side of claiming credit that others deserve. Instead of depriving others of their rightful glory for a success, you wrongfully saddle them with the shame of your failure.

You're not fooling anyone — except perhaps yourself — and no matter how much you think you're saving your hide, you're actually killing it.

Habit No. 20: An Excessive Need to Be 'Me'

This is the chronic behavior, both positive and negative, that we think of as our inalterable essence. If we're chronically poor at returning phone calls — whether because we're overcommitted, we're simply rude or we believe if people really need to talk to us they'll call again until they get through — we mentally give ourselves a pass every time we fail to get back to callers: "Hey, that's me. Deal with it."

It's easy to make a virtue of our flaws — simply because flaws constitute what we think of as "me." This is one of the toughest obstacles to making positive long-term change in our behavior. But it doesn't need to be.

That's because it's not about you. It's about what other people think of you. The less you focus on your need to "be me" and the more you consider what your staff is feeling, the more it will benefit you. ■

The 21st Habit: Goal Obsession

Goal obsession stands apart from the other 20 habits, not because it is a flaw, but because it is often the root cause of an annoying behavior. The habit is the force at play when we get so wrapped up in achieving our goal that we do it at the expense of a larger mission.

Goal obsession comes from misunderstanding what you want in your life. You think you'd be truly happy if you made more money, lost 30 pounds or got the corner office. So you pursue those goals relentlessly. You don't appreciate until later that in obsessing about making more money, you might be neglecting the loved ones for whom you are presumably securing that money.

It also comes from misunderstanding what others want you to do. A boss tells you that you have to show 10 percent revenue growth for the year, so when it appears you will miss that target, goal obsession forces you to adopt questionable, less-than-honest methods of hitting the target. If you examine it more closely, you're not obsessed with hitting the 10 percent growth; your true goal is pleasing your boss.

These are the classic conditions of the goal obsessed, which makes it all the more important to reflect:

- Am I achieving a task — and forgetting my organization?
- Am I making money to support my family — and forgetting the family I am trying to support?
- Are you on time to deliver a sermon to your staff — and forgetting to practice what you preach?
- After all this effort you don't want to find yourself at a dead end, asking, "What have I done?" ■

PART III – HOW WE CAN CHANGE FOR THE BETTER

Feedback

Feedback has always been with us. Formal up-the-ladder feedback designed to help managers appeared in the middle of the 20th century with the first suggestion box. A more recent development is 360-degree feedback, which is solicited from everybody at all levels of the organization. Here are five ways to get feedback by paying closer attention to the world around you:

1. **Make a list of people's casual remarks about you.** Examples: "That was really smart" or "You're late." Then do it the next day and the next. Do it at home too, if you want. Eventually you'll compile enough data about yourself to establish the challenge before you.

2. **Observe how people deal with you.** Do they listen when you have the floor or are they drumming their fingers? A variation on this drill is to make sure you're the first person to arrive at a meeting. Observe how people respond to you as they enter. Do they pull up a chair next to you? Or do they barely acknowledge your presence and sit across the room?

3. **Complete the sentence.** Pick the one thing you want to get better at, then list the positive benefits that will accrue to you and the world if you achieve it. For example, "If I get in shape, one benefit to me is that …" and then complete the sentence. As you get deeper into this exercise, your answers will become less corporately correct and more personal. That's when you know you've hit on an interpersonal skill that you really want and need to improve.

4. **Listen to your self-aggrandizing remarks.** None of us is immune to this phenomenon. What do you boast about? It's possible that if you assess this alleged "strength" as closely as your friends do, it's really a weakness. You shouldn't be bragging about it at all.

5. **Look homeward.** Your flaws at work don't vanish when you walk through the door at home.

Feedback tells us what to change, not how to do it. But when you know what to change, you're ready to start changing yourself and how people perceive you. You're ready for the next step: telling everyone you're sorry. ■

For additional information on apologizing, go to: http://my.summary.com

Practicing 'Feedforward'

Feedforward is feedback going in the opposite direction. If feedback reports on how you functioned in the past, then feedforward comes in the form of ideas that you can put into practice in the future. Feedforward asks you to do four simple things:

1. Pick one behavior you would like to change that would make a significant difference in your life.
2. Describe this objective in a one-on-one dialogue to anyone you know.
3. Ask that person for two suggestions for the future that might help you achieve a positive change in your selected behavior. The only ground rule is there can be no mention of the past. Everything is about the future.
4. Listen attentively to the suggestions. Take notes if you want. The only ground rule is you are not allowed to judge, rate or critique the suggestions. You can't even say anything positive. The only response you're permitted is "Thank you."

Telling the World, or Advertising

After you apologize, you must *advertise*. You have to declare in what area you intend to change. You have to be your own press secretary. You can't just apologize and say you're trying to be better just once. You have to drill it into people repeatedly, until they've internalized the concept. Here's how to act like your own press secretary:

- Treat every day as if it were a press conference during which your colleagues are judging you, waiting to see you trip up. That mindset will boost your self-awareness enough to remind you to stay on high alert.
- Behave as if every day is an opportunity to hit home your message — to remind people you're trying really hard.
- Treat every day as a chance to take on all challengers. There will be people who don't want you to succeed. So be a little paranoid. If you're alert to those who want you to fail, you'll know how to handle them.
- Think of the process as an election campaign. You don't elect yourself to the position of "new improved you." Your colleagues do.
- Think of the process in terms of weeks and months, not just day to day. ■

Listening

Eighty percent of our success in learning from other people is based on how well we listen. Most people think listening is a passive activity. Not true. Good listeners regard what they do as a highly active process — with every muscle engaged, especially the brain. There are three things good listeners do:

1. Think before they speak.
2. Listen with respect.
3. Gauge their response by asking themselves, "Is it

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Listening

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worth it?"

The ability to make a person feel that he or she is the most important (and only) person in the room is the skill that separates the great from the near-great. The great ones do it all the time. ■

Expressing Gratitude

Thanking people works because it expresses one of our most basic emotions: gratitude. When someone does something nice for you, they expect gratitude — and think less of you for withholding it.

The best thing about saying "Thank you" is that it creates closure in any potentially explosive discussion. What can you say after someone thanks you? You can't argue with them. You can't try to prove them wrong. You can't trump them, get angry or ignore them. ■

Following Up

People need to go back to *all* their co-workers every month or so and ask for comments and suggestions. If you do this every month, your colleagues eventually begin to accept that you're getting better — not because you say so but because it's coming from their lips.

Follow-up is the most protracted part of the process of changing for the better. It goes on for 12 to 18 months. It's the difference-maker in the process. More than anything, though, follow-up makes you do it, because by engaging in the follow-up process, you are *changing*. ■

PART IV – PULLING OUT THE STOPS

Changing: The Rules

The following eight rules will help you get a better handle on the process of change. If you obey them, you'll be stacking the deck in your favor.

1. You might not have a disease that behavioral change can cure. Sometimes feedback reveals a symptom, not a disease. For instance, one CEO's feedback was all positive, but he felt completely at sea with changing technology. The solution was not behavioral change, but getting a tech guru to mentor him.

2. Pick the right thing to change. Successful people have a tendency to overcommit. If you list seven flaws, you'll want to tackle all of them. Turn your attention to the one vital flaw that needs fixing.

3. Don't delude yourself about what you *really* must change.

4. Don't hide from the truth you need to hear.

5. There is no ideal behavior. The perfect benchmark human being, like the perfect benchmark organization, does not exist. No matter how many of the successful attributes for the model executive you could list that you *don't* embody, the real question is, how bad is the problem?

6. If you can measure it, you can achieve it. Measuring is the only way you can know for sure how you're doing.

7. Monetize the result, then create a solution. There are all sorts of ways to encourage people to change their behavior — from bonuses to vacations.

8. The best time to change is now. It's time to stop dreaming of a time when you won't be busy, because the time will never come. Ask yourself, "What am I willing to change now?" ■

You Are Here Now

Research was conducted involving more than 200 high-potential leaders from companies around the world. These are people who could jump at a moment's notice to better-paying positions elsewhere. Each was asked a simple question: "If you stay in this company, why are you going to stay?" The three top answers were:

1. "I am finding meaning and happiness now. The work is exciting and I love what I am doing."

2. "I like the people. They are my friends. This feels like a team, like a family."

3. "I can follow my dreams. This organization is giving me a chance to do what I really want to do in life."

The answers were never about money. They were always about happiness, relationships, following dreams and meaning. Use that wisdom now. Don't look ahead. Look behind. Look back from your old age at the life you hope to live. You are here. You can get there! Let the journey begin. ■

SOUNDVIEW RECOMMENDED READING LIST

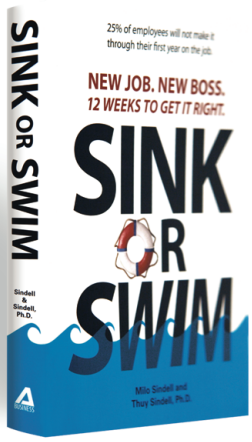
If you liked *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*, you'll also like:

1. ***The Speed of Trust*** **by Stephen M.R. Covey with Rebecca Merrill.** There is one thing common to every individual, relationship, family, organization, economy and civilization. That one thing is trust.
2. ***Know-How*** **by Ram Charan.** The author presents eight skills that separate top performers from nonperformers in the corporate world.
3. ***Go Put Your Strengths to Work*** **by Marcus Buckingham.** Research shows that most people do not make full use of their strengths on the job. Buckingham intends to change that through a six-step, six-week experience that will reveal the hidden magnitude of your strengths.
4. ***The Carrot Principle*** **by Adrian Gostick and Chester Elton.** The authors team up to show readers how the best managers are able to use recognition to engage employees, boost performance and retain talent.
5. ***Words that Work*** **by Dr. Frank Luntz.** According to Dr. Luntz, to effectively obtain the power of communication, you must learn that it's not always what you say, but how you say it.

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SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®



by Milo Sindell and Thuy Sindell, Ph.D.

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New Job. New Boss. 12 Weeks to Get It Right.

SINK OR SWIM

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Today, the concept of lifetime employment in the same job or even with a single employer is unimaginable and probably undesirable. The fact is that over time, most people get bored and benefit from a change. Even worse, if you are reporting to a boss who does not treat you particularly well, years of employment in the same situation can be profoundly demoralizing.

What's important for you to understand is that you own your career. You are responsible for setting professional goals, identifying and developing the right skills, and building your resume. Every time you develop new skills, you become even more valuable in the job market.

According to Milo Sindell and Thuy Sindell, Ph.D., the first 12 weeks in a new job are an important time in your life. You worked hard to find the right company, did all the right things to make your resume rise to the top of the pile and aced the interview. Now you've got the job. It's time to establish yourself as a valuable and valued member of your new company.

Your mission is to get up to speed as quickly as possible in your first 12 weeks on the job. Why 12 weeks? In most companies, there is a period of approximately 90 days in which you and the company decide if this new arrangement will work out. That's why first impressions matter. Ninety days is not a long time. Therefore, it is critical that you swim with the current and keep your head above water. Remember, people are watching and paying attention to you; use this positively to your advantage.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The five Sink or Swim skills that will help you make the most of your new opportunity.
- The characteristics of effective casual conversation in the workplace.
- The why, what, who, when and where of creating and delivering your own personal PR message.
- How to define the resources you need for a project through a knowledge-gap analysis.
- How to clarify a company's culture so that you can be more in sync with your corporate environment.
- What steps you need to take to expand your network.

Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries, P.O. Box 1053, Concordville, PA 19331 USA
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User Instructions

Companies understand that times have changed: Employees aren't married to the company anymore. To retain their employees, companies must offer a range of benefits. Smart companies understand that it not only takes a competitive salary to attract and retain good employees, but it also takes programs that support employees' needs and interests.

Smart companies, however, also know that all these benefits are not enough to keep the top talent from going to the competition. Therefore, they strive to provide opportunities for employees to learn new skills or change jobs within the company in order to keep people engaged and motivated.

However smart companies may be, you as an employee must also be smart and make the most of your job. You have two responsibilities:

1. A responsibility to your company to do what you were hired to do.
2. A responsibility to yourself to develop your skills, create and identify opportunities, and manage your career.

Your company should be clear about what it expects of you; however, you must also take charge and be clear about your expectations of your employer. What do you want in exchange for contributing your skills, abilities and experience? Besides your salary and health insurance benefits, what else do you want? What about learning opportunities so you can have more skills and be more marketable? What about career advancement? What about a positive work environment?

You won't get what you want if you don't know what you want. When both sets of expectations are clearly defined (i.e., for your company and yourself), you will be able to provide the maximum value to your company and in return have your own needs met.

The Five Sink or Swim Skills

Your first 12 weeks in a new job are crucial. During these initial weeks, there are five Sink or Swim skills that, when applied at the right time, can ensure that you make the most of your new opportunity.

The five Sink or Swim skills are:

• **Goals:** Get clear on your role, responsibilities, projects and where you want to be in your new company and career. Set goals to get you where you want to be.

• **Time:** Learn the most important elements of effective time management and fine-tune how to apply them for maximum results. Be productive and focused.

• **Knowledge:** Get the right knowledge to do your job, develop your network of resources, identify ways to develop your own skills and share what you know with others. Have the right information when you need it and demonstrate your value to others.

• **Team:** Learn what it means to be a team player and how to be one even if you are not part of a team. Work well with others and build a lasting network of partnerships.

• **Image:** Focus on the skills of identifying and crafting the right professional image. Clearly communicate who you are and what you stand for. ■

Week 1: Case the Joint

It's amazing how much excitement and attention you put into your first day of work. The goal is to keep just as excited and motivated throughout the next 12 weeks and beyond. In this first week, focus on gathering information to better understand your work environment. Case the joint and figure out the lay of the land.

What does it mean to "case the joint"? It means that you

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Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries (ISSN 0747-2196), P.O. Box 1053, Concordville, PA 19331 USA, a division of Concentrated Knowledge Corp. Published monthly. Subscriptions: $209 per year in the United States, Canada and Mexico, and $295 to all other countries. Periodicals postage paid at Concordville, Pa., and additional offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Soundview, P.O. Box 1053, Concordville, PA 19331. Copyright © 2007 by Soundview Executive Book Summaries.

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Week 1: Case the Joint

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need to figure out how your new company operates. While this may sound like an easy thing to do, it does take some time to figure out the details of how your company works. In the first few days of the job, this information may not be readily available, or fellow employees may be too busy to give you a full rundown on operations.

As you go through your first week, keep in mind the old adage: Knowledge and information are powerful, but having the right knowledge and information is power. If you have the right information at the start of your job, you have the power to make the best decisions during your first critical days at work.

Goals: Why Am I Here?

This is a good question to ask and answer in the first week. As you will find through the first 12 weeks on the job and beyond, there are employees who have become separated from their original career paths and float around the corporate hallways. This is not you. A top priority for this week is to understand your job responsibilities, roles and projects.

Part of the responsibility for answering "Why am I here?" lies with your manager. Meet with him or her sometime during your first week. This will enable you to understand what's expected of you in terms of projects as well as expectations for the first few weeks on the job.

You may have just entered a situation in which you are thrown directly into the fire and are expected to jump in and get started on a project immediately. Or, you may have the luxury of having a manager who wants you to spend the first few weeks getting to know your new environment, the company and your co-workers.

The Art of Casual Conversation

The way you talk and the kind of conversations you have in your first week are also important components of the initial impression you leave. Notice how employees in your company talk to and greet one another. These are important things to keep in mind before you are overly demonstrative on your few first days on the job. Greet co-workers appropriately.

In this first week, keep your introductory conversations to surface-level information, such as your experience and a few personal facts. Keep your conversations warm, cordial and professional. The goal is to build relationships with co-workers, not scare them away. Also remember that the world does not revolve around you. In this first week, your focus is to case the joint and gather information. Be sure to ask others about their background, history with the company and current projects on which they are working.

The goal of the first week is to make introductions and have casual conversations. This means that your conversations may last anywhere from one minute to 10 minutes in the hallway to a one-hour lunch. The length of the conversation should be appropriate to the setting. Do not make others hostages of your conversations. Keep them to the appropriate length. Look for telltale signs that others are itching to leave and gracefully allow them to exit.

Your ability to start off with a strong impression in both your appearance and conversational skills will provide a foundation for others to want to build relationships with you. ■

Week 2: Get a Firm Grip

During these first weeks on the job you will be hard at work ensuring that you have what you need to make a positive impact. In order to set the right direction and demonstrate results, you will need to understand how your work correlates to your team's and company's goals.

Defining these links will give you direction and motivation because it will enable you to understand how your job directly relates to your company's success. Your objective in week two is to get a firm grip on the details of your job and how your role relates to the products and services the company delivers to its customers.

Gap Analysis

As you get a clearer understanding about the various components that relate to your project and goals, it should become apparent which resources you need to get work completed. The first step is to define what you need by way of a knowledge-gap analysis. What is a gap analysis? In the context of your goals, it is a method to define where you are, where you need to be and what it will take to get there. A gap analysis identifies the skills, information and knowledge you will need.

To perform a knowledge-gap analysis, define your overall job responsibilities and the projects you've been given. For each project, define the following:

- What information do you need to successfully complete the job?
- What information do you currently have?
- What information will you need to acquire?

Once you have a gap analysis completed for a project, review it and pursue the information you need to accomplish the project. ■

Week 3: Buckle Down

Your broader objective for this week is to buckle down. This means you will get going on your projects and confirm your progress with your manager. You will continue to assess and practice your time-management skills and team skills and to polish your image skills by practicing when to ask questions, inform others and stay silent. You are on track to your destination.

Reinventing the Wheel

In week three, your quest for knowledge will focus on the various resources you will need. Start with the resources that are available around you. Teammates and co-workers are good sources of information. As you begin to gather the necessary resources, it is important that you do a thorough job of identifying the people and information that impact your projects.

There is a good possibility that similar efforts might have been made by people within and outside of your company. It will be especially valuable to talk with people in your company about similar projects they've worked on, resources they can share with you, words of advice and pitfalls to avoid. You will notice as you are working on your project that there may be additional skills that it would be helpful for you to develop.

However, unless you like to do more work, what is the point of reinventing the wheel? The efficient and effective way of getting your projects completed is to figure out what has already been done. No matter what you are working on, odds are that others have walked a similar path. It will save you and your company time, money and effort if you identify and build upon existing work and resources. This can even inspire new ideas and ways of approaching a problem.

Don't be too proud to ask. There are tons of lessons and great bits of knowledge to be gathered from co-workers and teammates. Get insight on the subtle nuances they have figured out about how things get done in your company. This kind of knowledge comes only from experience.

As you conclude each of your conversations, make sure to always ask the following: "Is there anybody else you would recommend I should talk to about this?" No matter how dry a well your initial contact might have been as a knowledge source, that person may have connections that will provide the information you seek.

Keep in mind, however, when building upon the existing work of your colleagues and company, obviously you should not plagiarize. Obey all patent, trademark and copyright laws. In addition, give your contributors credit. Publicly thank people for their knowledge and contributions. This is extremely important unless you want to quickly torch your bridges. You want to build trust and collaboration. ■

Managing Your Manager

Do you really get to manage your manager? Yes. As counterintuitive as that may sound, there is an underlying expectation that you will be one step ahead of your manager when it comes to your work. The goal for any manager is to have a direct report who is a mind reader.

Here are some examples of what it means to manage your manager: It means you are self-sufficient and do not need a lot of hand-holding. You anticipate your manager's every need by coming to the table prepared. For example, you come to meetings prepared with list of key items you want to discuss. You invest the five to 10 minutes to develop an agenda that keeps you and your manager on track and focused. Finally, managing your manager means you provide the right information at the right time.

Week 4: Immerse Yourself

By now, you are making progress in your new work environment. In this week, you will draw upon what you have learned and move forward to immerse yourself in your projects. By now, you've been on the job for one month, and you're doing the work you were hired to do. But remember to continue taking in new information, keeping pace and making adjustments to stay on course toward success.

Scope Creep

Often you'll find yourself in the middle of a project that you thought had a clearly defined destination, goals and measures of success, only to realize you are now adrift in a sea of ambiguity. This is "scope creep." Things might have seemed so clear just days before, but now you have a queasy feeling that the project has changed. These changes can be subtle and sneaky or big and bold. Symptoms of scope creep include increasingly vague goals and additional objectives that don't relate to the project's initial desired result.

To avoid scope creep, do the following:

1. Ensure that you have clearly defined project goals.
2. When you get the sinking feeling that your project is off course or that co-workers are adding work, communicate your observations that the original

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Week 4: Immerse Yourself

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objective appears to be changing.

3. Renegotiate when you notice that your project scope is changing.

An additional symptom of "scope creep" is when other projects get added to yours. These add-ons are often orphan initiatives that were abandoned, never quite got off the ground or were never formally terminated. As adorable as these orphan initiatives can be, once they attach themselves to your projects, they can become burdensome parasites. Keep your eyes open and stay clear on your project objectives. Knowing what your project needs will help you differentiate between valid additions and orphans looking for a home. ■

Week 5: Climb Onto the Observation Deck

In every job there are both formal and informal ways by which work gets accomplished. The formal stuff is all around you, such as the rules and regulations pertaining to your conduct, as well as other company policies. The formal ways by which work gets done are also dictated by policies and procedures, management styles, and specific products or services.

However, as you spend more time in your job and observing others, you will probably realize that perhaps there's more than meets the eye. What you notice are the informal things — the unwritten rules and ways that work gets done.

Importance of Time

As you probably noticed, your new company has a distinct way of valuing time. Understanding the value that is placed on deadlines and schedules and differentiating between what people say they want and what actually happens will help you plan, prioritize and successfully navigate the logistical irregularities in your company.

Time is treated differently by each organization. You may find that meetings are set to begin at the top of the hour. Yet everyone knows that if they arrive on time they will be sitting alone for five minutes, so everyone purposely shows up at the meeting five minutes late. The same goes for behaviors related to deadlines. Are they steadfast or flexible? What are the effects of this? Be aware of these practices since they will help you follow rules and guidelines. They will also provide you with the opportunity to influence and model more professional behaviors. ■

Week 6: Ignite Your Star Power

Up to this point, you will have been observing, applying what you've learned and working on developing your skills. In week six, focus on the unique skills, knowledge and abilities that you bring to your job. Identify what distinguishes you. Defining what makes you unique will enable you to better utilize your skills, share more effectively with your team and others in your organization, and identify opportunities for further professional development. This will also help you to zero in on the specific skills, traits and other abilities that you want to be known for.

Professional Legacy

Coinciding with your consideration of what makes you unique, think about the following: What is the professional legacy you want to build? A professional legacy is the intentional impact and contribution that you want to make in each of your jobs and the experience and learning you want to take with you.

When you know what you want to create in your new company, you will have focused direction and motivation. Your work will have a fundamentally deeper meaning because you are clear on how your work relates to what you want to create during your time in your current position. Defining and creating your professional legacy reflects what is unique about who you are, what you know, what you want to be known for and how you want to be remembered.

Feedback

As you work toward becoming a star at work, you will want to ensure that you are heading in the right direction. The last thing you want is to go off in one direction, only to realize you may need to make a U-turn. An excellent way to ensure that you are on the right track is to gather feedback about how you are performing and compare what you think you are doing well with how others, particularly your manager and team, perceive you. While the importance of gathering feedback may be common sense, few people do it because of apprehension or not knowing how to ask.

Here are some guidelines for effectively asking for and receiving feedback:

• Be specific when asking for feedback. Identify a specific behavior, event or project.

• If you receive a general or vague answer, try to probe deeper, for example, "Will you elaborate what you mean by 'fine'?" If your additional query fails to elicit further comment, let it rest.

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Week 6: Ignite Your Star Power

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• Always thank people for their feedback no matter how reassuring or surprising your new bits of information are.

Your PR Message

As you get clear on what skills and traits make up your star power and add value to your team and company, it is important that your image be consistent with what you want to be known for. Your intentional professional image is based on your personal public relations plan. Why? With any product, we have a perception of what the product delivers and stands for based on the message that comes across in the marketing campaign. It is equally important that you have your own marketing campaign.

It's time to create your PR message. What do you want to be known for? What do you want the association to be when people think of you? When you think about how to craft and deliver your message, always consider the five Ws: *why, what, who, when* and *where*.

Why: The intent of your PR message is to communicate your values and what you want to be known for.

What: As you think about your professional legacy and strengths, what are some key words that best capture your values? Find three key words that represent what you want to be known for. Once you have determined them, deliver this message to others, not only through conversation, but also through your actions and physical appearance.

Who: Deliver your message to everyone. Just know your audience. If you are having a difficult time with a co-worker, it may be important that the person understand you better. You may have to state your PR message on a regular basis and at every interaction.

When: Keep in mind when delivering your PR message that it must be relevant to the topic being discussed. While you want to state your message with frequency, you do not want to put your co-workers to sleep with your broken record. State each item of your PR message in one concise sentence. Rotate your message depending on the situation.

Where: Choose the appropriate venue to deliver your message. After you define and articulate your values in your PR message, use e-mail as your initial method of communication. In that way, you can draft your message, read it and reread it so that it makes sense and is in your own words. After a few practice e-mail drafts, you will be ready to deliver your message in face-to-face and phone conversations. ■

Week 7: Do Lunch

By this point, you should have created a network — the culmination of relationships and connections that you have available through the people you know. Your network is critical for helping you work more effectively, gather the right information, accomplish your objectives and create a comfortable work environment.

First Things First

Revitalizing and expanding your network may seem like a big deal and potentially a lot of work. It doesn't have to be. Remember, on the surface, larger goals are quickly made bite-size by creating a task list. You realize it really just involves calling back two people to make sure they have all the information they need from you for their projects or sending out five e-mails with information you promised to pass along.

Once you identify tasks, ensure that you have specific action items you can tackle. If your task is to get input for your project, create action items on your task list. Once an action item gets placed on your task list, it's one less thing you have to worry about. Start using your task list by prioritizing who you need to follow up with, who you need to contact regarding a project or other work-related inquiry, and who you can share resources with. Remember, it is never too late to follow up with people. ■

Week 8: Map Your Coordinates

You are far along in the process of exploring your new workplace, and it's important to stop and map your coordinates to ensure that the course you are on takes you in the right direction. Look toward the horizon and define goals for the next six months. Scan the business environment for potential trends and practice balancing the objectives of today with opportunities for the future.

What Do You Want?

Now that you have been on the job for two months, think about where you want to be in six months. Think about what projects you want to be involved in or initiate, new skills you want to develop and other interests that you have. First, clearly define what you want before taking steps toward your future. While this may sound simple, you'd be surprised to discover that there are many people who do not identify what they want. Your future should not be a random series of events but a manifestation of setting a clear direction and achieving what you want.

Based on your observations of your new company,

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Week 8: Map Your Coordinates

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determine what you would like to accomplish six months down the road. Begin by asking the following questions:

- Are there any emerging trends or events that might influence your industry, company, department or profession?
- On what kind of projects do you want to be working?
- What new responsibilities would you like to have?
- What new skills or knowledge would you like to develop?
- What new relationships would you like to establish?

After you identify your goal, you will need to answer one important question: Why do you want it? When you know the answer to this question, you will stay motivated, and when things get challenging, it will be easy to remind yourself why you are working so hard. ■

Week 9: Look in Your Rearview Mirror

Your main objective during week nine is to review how you are developing and applying your new skills. This week provides a great opportunity to review your progress and ensure that you are headed for success. Identify what is working well and any areas that need more attention.

Planning and Delivery

By now you have realized that successful, on-time delivery of your projects takes more than luck — it takes planning. Planning is critical unless you are an adrenaline junkie who thrives on the rush of a suddenly remembered deadline.

As you continue through your 12 weeks, review your projects and how you are delivering on them. First, review your project deadlines; if your deadlines are up to date in your calendar, then you're in the clear. Your calendar is the most valuable time-management resource you have.

Next, take a look at how well you are creating a timeline in which to achieve your goals. Good detailed planning is one thing, but if your timeline and milestones are unrealistic, you are setting yourself up for suboptimal achievement. If your timeline is too aggressive, you might be reaching too far too fast.

The importance of the first weeks on the job is to make sure you are pacing yourself and delivering results. Remember, you are being measured on how well you execute. ■

Week 10: Perform a Reality Check

Now that you have been on the job for over two months, you are getting a better sense of what your company, team and co-workers are really like. The honeymoon is by no means over; it is still love. However, you are getting the hang of the quirks and idiosyncrasies that make your workplace unique.

After spending a couple of months in a company, you will find that your initial understanding of your company's culture, pace, knowledge-sharing practices, teams and communication has deepened or even changed completely. The perspective you have now is closer to reality. In week 10, you will look at your new workplace through eyes that have more experience and insight than when you started your job. When you define the real work environment, you will be able to anticipate potential obstacles, focus your resources and make the right choices.

Clarifying the "C" Word: Culture

Management professor and organization-culture guru Edgar Schein suggests that in order to better define and understand organization culture, you should look at it as having three levels.

Level 1 – Artifacts: Artifacts are generally visible and readily identifiable. Artifacts in your company might include the structures, work processes and awards.

Level 2 – Values: These are a company's espoused values, such as its goals, strategies and philosophies.

Level 3 – Underlying Assumptions: The basic underlying assumptions a company has, such as its beliefs. A company's underlying assumptions are often taken for granted or unconscious.

As you start to look at your company's culture and the ways the business operates, what are the things you notice on the surface? What values does the company espouse, and what do they really say about the company? Use Schein's model to focus and organize your observations.

It will be valuable to see the interrelationships or disconnections between your company's artifacts, espoused values and underlying assumptions. Completely figuring out your company's culture will take time. However, by knowing what to look for, you can very easily start putting the pieces together. Decoding the culture of your company will help you tremendously to be in sync and thrive. ■

Week 11: Declare Victory

At this point, you are getting close to completing your first 12 weeks. You are becoming a full-fledged member of your team and organization, you have connections and you are deep into your projects. This is an exciting time as you are approaching your third month on the job. It's important to review how your projects are coming along and, on a larger level, your technique and methods for success.

Week 12: Raise Your Sails

It is time to set your sights on your future. Consider where you are now, what you have learned and where you want to be one year from now. Envision your future and set direction.

The Big Picture

What does it mean to think "big picture," and how is it relevant to setting your one-year goal? To sum it up, your life is the "big picture," and a one-year goal is about progress in your life. You have the potential to achieve everything you set your mind on attaining. It will take focus, dedication and even a bit of hard work. The exciting and wonderful thing is that you have the ability to set a goal and reach it. A very powerful way to think about what you want to achieve is in terms of what you want to create and share with your workplace: your professional legacy.

In every work setting, you have an opportunity to create something that will live on after you leave your team, group, division or company. Like a fingerprint, the professional legacy you create reflects your unique skills and abilities. Your professional legacy can take many forms, including introducing new ways to get work done, a new product or service, or relationships and changes to how teammates and co-workers work together. Your professional legacy is also something that you take with you. It is part of who you are, your professional experience and your identity.

Your one-year goal is a big deal. You will spend your time and effort driving toward a result. You want that result to be fulfilling for you as a person and also exciting enough that you will keep working toward it despite possible setbacks. To begin identifying your one-year goal, consider the following questions: Where do you see yourself one year from now? What would you find rewarding to accomplish in one year's time? What do you want to be responsible for creating in your job?

Set yourself up for success by considering the realities of your work environment and what you've been able to accomplish in three months. As you think about what you want to achieve, recognize the reality of what is possible and at the same time push the boundaries. Don't just make it an easy goal to achieve. It must have meaning to you and push you to bring out the best of your talents.

Changes

As you look toward your one-year goal, determine what changes to your image will need to take place. Identify areas of development for your communication, PR and networking skills. In order to reach your one-year goal, it will be important over the next year to continue to diligently pay attention to how your image is supporting your goal. Remember that you are a professional at all times. Say it, show it and do it.

In order for you to be that superstar one year from now, make sure your verbal and nonverbal communication skills are consistent with the professional image that you want.

- What will you have to start or continue to do in order to look and act the part of a superstar?
- How will you want to talk to people? What's the tone of voice you want to use?
- How important are your active listening, rapport-building and ask/inform skills?
- What PR message do you want others to hear?

Put It All Together

As you continue to practice and hone your Sink or Swim skills, your role is to build a strong relationship between yourself and your employer. As you continue on beyond week 12, keep in mind the following:

- Always look for opportunities in every situation.
- Know your strengths and where you contribute value.
- Know when and how to ask for help.

You will continue to use your Sink or Swim skills throughout the rest of your career, but for now, congratulations on completing the 12th week on the job. Be your own champion and keep on swimming. ■

SOUNDVIEW RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Sink or Swim*, you'll also like:

1. ***Words That Work* by Dr. Frank Luntz.** Luntz offers sound advice on how to tactically use words and phrases to get what you want in life.
2. ***Mastering Business Negotiation* by Roy J. Lewicki & Alexander Hiam.** This is a valuable resource — grounded in solid research — for any leader or manager who needs practical strategies when conducting business negotiations.
3. ***What Got You Here Won't Get You There* by Marshall Goldsmith with Mark Reiter.** The corporate world is full of skilled executives, but few will ever reach the top; according to Goldsmith, subtle nuances make the difference.

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Jodi Ecker Detjen

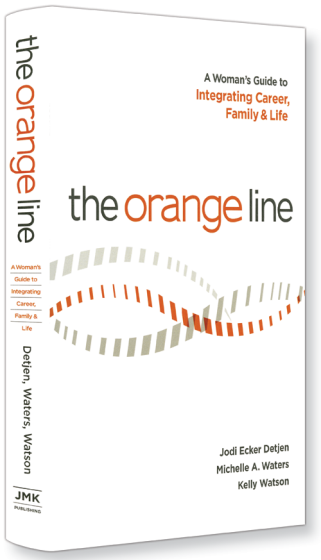
November 2015

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The Orange Line

A Woman's Guide to Integrating Career, Family & Life



by Jodi Ecker Detjen, Michelle A. Waters and Kelly Watson

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Why do women find work-life balance so hard? Why is having it all such an illusive quest? Why haven't women achieved equality yet in the leadership ranks? Authors Jodi Ecker Detjen, Michelle A. Waters and Kelly Watson probe these questions and more in this highly anticipated new book: *The Orange Line: A Woman's Guide to Integrating Career, Family & Life*. Through interviews with 118 college-educated women, they document the varied career stories and day-to-day anecdotes in the ongoing work-life struggle. They also uncover a revolutionary new line of thinking: Women are holding themselves back with outdated ideals and rigid rules for how to act. Naming this limiting belief system The Feminine Filter™, the authors call on women to reframe their assumptions, shed their guilt and pursue their vocation with passion. The authors provide tools to help women remove this Filter so they can see more clearly to a new career path that includes work, family and themselves. It is the most radical call to arms for women in decades, but instead of asking governments and organizations to change, the authors inspire women to look inward to claim their power.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Core assumptions of the Feminine Filter that can limit women.
- Six core skills for counteracting the Feminine Filter and living an Orange Line life.
- The common stages of women's life/career trajectory.
- How to implement and live the Orange Line at each life/career stage.

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THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THE ORANGE LINE**

by Jodi Ecker Detjen, Michelle A. Waters and Kelly Watson

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PART I: THE ORANGE LINE PHILOSOPHY

Introducing The Orange Line™

Rarely do you hear a man asked, "How do you do it all — you have a career *and* a family?" Yet people ask women this all the time, as if it is special to do it all, to live a robust whole life — something unheard of. It keeps reinforcing the same story, that men can supposedly have self-actualization but that if women want it, they either need to marry a stay-at-home husband, or they need to give up having a family.

There are three models for lifetime career trajectory choices for women. A Green Line to represent a career-focused track; A Red Line to represent a career trajectory curtailed when a woman "opts out" at some point; and The Orange Line to represent the possibility of a new approach, an integrated life path.

The Green Line: Career Focus Track

The Green Line represents a traditional, career-centric life, where education, intelligence, skills, plus a singular focus on career can lead to significant success. The path follows a steep career progression through the 20s and early 30s and a slightly flatter climb over time, but it is always moving forward and upwards.

There is often tremendous sacrifice to achieve the Green Line. Green liners rarely have time to explore other aspects of themselves. The Green Line approach usually requires someone else to pick up the slack at home, especially when it comes to family.

The Red Line: Opting Out

The Red Line represents a career track where someone, once on the Green Line, usually a woman, abandons her career at some point to shift focus to another aspect of her life. The key defining description for this path is that career takes a secondary role or disappears as the focus moves fully to life and/or family. While women on the Red Line may indeed ultimately rejoin their career, in most cases they end up paying a huge penalty for their time off.

The Red Line versus Green Line view of work can block alternate ways to manage a career. The tradeoff between work and life can seem black and white for women on the Red Line, and this is a narrow view.

The Orange Line: Integrated Life Track

There is a new career track opportunity called The Orange Line. Instead of a singular focus on work from the beginning, The Orange Line is a launching pad for a robust, whole life integrating work, family and self. The key difference with this path is that people place themselves, not work or family, at the center of their life choices.

The Orange Line worker does not need to choose between work and life; she chooses both and lives both fully. Instead of the seesaw, envision a rectangle with "me" as the foundational base. No matter what other elements with which a woman chooses to enrich her life, whether career, family or otherwise, she is in control, not at the fulcrum, trying to balance.

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Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries® (ISSN 0747-2196), 511 School House Road, Suite 300, Kennett Square, PA 19348 USA. Published monthly. Subscriptions starting at $99 per year. Copyright © 2015 by Soundview, Inc. **Available formats:** Summaries are available in several digital formats. To subscribe, call us at 1-800-SUMMARY (240-912-7513 outside the United States), or order online at www.summary.com. Multiple-subscription discounts and corporate site licenses are also available.

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The Feminine Filter™

To fully live on The Orange Line, women need to recognize what is blocking them. The crucial problem is the Feminine Filter. This is a system of adopted beliefs and made-up rules that distract or prevent women from reaching their *métier*. The French word *métier* more broadly incorporates purpose and career.

The Feminine Filter operates on certain assumptions and associated bad habits.

Assumption 1. Because women assume that they are primarily responsible for home and family, they tend to acquiesce to the needs of everyone else and sacrifice their career ambitions and personal goals.

Assumption 2. Because women assume, "My commitment is measured by how much time I devote to it," they tend to work harder, not smarter, focusing on the quantity of work over quality.

Assumption 3. Because women assume that "I need to be perfect in behavior and appearance at all times," they tend to avoid risk and overcompensate to ensure they make no mistakes. When things don't go perfectly, they may panic about it, making ill-formed decisions.

Assumption 4. Because women assume, "I am not good enough," they tend to create a diversion to distract others, like "drama," or seek external validation to avoid addressing an internal belief that they don't look good.

Assumption 5. Because women assume tangible, material rewards are not supposed to be important, they tend to lower their career expectations.

Assumption 6. Because women assume, "If I follow the rules, good things will happen," they tend to avoid asking for what they need or challenging the status quo.

The Feminine Filter Problem

When women continue to accept the assumptions and rules of the past, they support and reinforce existing rewards systems. Although virtually half of the workforce is women, the percentage with influence has barely changed in decades.

For true, long-term change, most women need to address their underlying assumptions and core belief system. So how do women make this change? By adopting a new belief system.

The Orange Line Skills

Women can replace the common bad habits by developing Orange Line Skills. The six skills for living on The Orange Line are

1. Recognize when the Feminine Filter is at work. By developing this skill, you notice when the Feminine Filter shows up and affects your judgment of others or yourself.

2. Bring yourself into the equation. You can stop adapting yourself to the system and instead set clear boundaries and expectations.

3. Develop self-awareness. You can begin to ask for feedback to determine your strengths and challenges.

4. Build a support system. You determine what help you need and ask for it, deciding what you are willing to give up and what you need to delegate to your family or colleagues at work.

5. Get comfortable operating in imperfection. You can start to accept that imperfection is a normal part of life and develop a muscle for ambiguity, flexibility and creativity.

6. Expand your universe. You experiment and take risks outside of your comfort zone, purposely exposing yourself to newness so that you can learn more.

You can learn how to live an Orange Line life. Every woman carves her Orange Line differently. Remember, big changes start with small steps.

PART II: HOW TO LIVE THE ORANGE LINE IN YOUR LIFE STAGE

The Green Start

Many women have a positive and energetic start to their careers. In the Green Start stage, you have launched your career, and the sky is the limit. You love work, and you like getting recognized for your talents and efforts. You likely believe that if you simply work hard, you can have it all.

But underneath all of the pride, ambition and excitement of this stage, there may be some problems that threaten to undermine women's early success. Green Starters' values may be out of sync with their organization. Work and working hard can become addictive. Some women may experience sexual stereotyping, behaviors and/or harassment in the workplace. Women may be working well below their capabilities and earning potential.

Skills for Living The Orange Line

Practicing these six skills at this early stage in your career means you won't have to unlearn as many bad habits or shed years of more entrenched beliefs.

1. Recognize when the Feminine Filter is at work. When Feminine Filter-inspired decision making is happening, it appears in your language, behaviors, choices and automated responses. You can listen for and recognize

Filter language in common phrases and messages. The next step is to become aware of guilt. You then need to observe your behavioral response. Finally, you can be more conscious in your choices and realize that you have an infinite number of options available to you.

2. Bring yourself into the equation. It is tempting to follow someone else's external vision for what you should want out of your career and life. It's important early on to develop your own vision and put yourself at the center of your life plan.

A major part of this is the ability to set boundaries and expectations. You need to get comfortable saying "no," especially when not doing so causes you harm, even on a small scale. Collaboration is an aptitude increasingly required in today's workplaces. Women need to ask for what they need.

3. Develop self-awareness. The power of the Green Start stage is that most women are still comfortable and open to learning new things. You can harness this to turn the microscope inward. By developing insights into yourself early in your career, you can more easily see and resist the Feminine Filter, enabling yourself to live The Orange Line across your career.

4. Build a support system. The most successful Orange Line women realize they cannot operate in a vacuum or do everything themselves. Building a support system enables you to focus your time and energy on the areas that are critical for your success and let go of those that don't serve you.

5. Get comfortable operating in imperfection. When the Feminine Filter screams to women to look good and follow the rules to get their rewards, women somehow internalize this as a need to be perfect. Early in a woman's career, she may think there is a perfect job for her and she needs to find it.

But life usually doesn't work in a straight line, and you are not abnormal if you don't follow a preset path. Accepting the reality of imperfection enables you to become more comfortable experimenting and taking risks.

6. Expand your universe. Being conscious of how your build your community and expand your universe makes a difference. The first element is to seek out people who will challenge you and push you forward. The second is to think bigger, being open to possibilities. The third is to proactively expose yourself to new experiences and risks.

This stage is where you can set yourself up well for Orange Line living and tackle the Feminine Filter before you get too entrenched in its bad habits. At this stage in your career, it's your job to make your career and your *métier* important in your life.

Approaching Burnout

Many women have experienced one or more periods in their careers when they are approaching burnout. Efforts to rise in their careers at the expense of the other parts of their lives had started to take its toll. Stress levels are highly elevated.

What causes burnout? Some of the stressors that pose pressure are external; however, much of women's stress is actually *internal, self-imposed*, a product of their own making. The biggest problem with approaching burnout is the bad decisions women can make when they are wound up. Examples include ending important relationships, drastic reversals of policy, giving up ground on projects and quitting altogether.

Skills for Living The Orange Line

If women approach this stage applying Orange Line thinking and build the six skills previously highlighted, burnout can be prevented. Here's what those skills look like at this stage:

1. Recognize when the Feminine Filter is at work. First, listen for and recognize Filter language behind widely used and accepted statements. For example, if you hear someone say, "You can't take a vacation now! We can't finish our project if you are gone!" Initially you may feel flattered that you are needed. But in reality, this assumption suggests that you are responsible for taking care of everything. Observing the assumptions underneath these statements helps women realize their potential negative impact and reframe them.

2. Bring yourself into the equation. When you are approaching burnout, bringing yourself into the equation seems like the last thing you have time to do. But it's not about being selfish; it's about having a strong sense of self.

Setting boundaries in this stage means valuing your time and setting realistic expectations. You can ask for what you need by getting something in return every time someone asks you for something.

3. Develop self-awareness. At this stage, developing self-awareness requires first that you recognize that you are approaching burnout.

Conducting a self-assessment could mean admitting when the problem is with you. Some people create a constant state of "overwhelmedness" because they like the sensation of being crazy. There's something about feeling busy, needed and liked that fuels adrenalin. Ask yourself if the sensation is worth the downside, and check yourself every time you say you are "busy."

4. Build a support system. In this stage, getting support may feel impossible. But building a support system will enable you to work through your burnout.

As women age, the ability to delegate becomes even more important. You will likely want to leverage your skills, experience and wisdom to accomplish more with less. Having a strong network can come in handy when it's time to figure out to whom you can delegate. Asking for help, making sure it's exactly the help you need and managing that help gets you through these intense periods.

5. Get comfortable operating in imperfection. Especially when you're approaching burnout, your need for perfection adds to your workload and threatens to overwhelm you. Embracing imperfection means trying something even though it might very well fail, and being ready to admit the failure. Recognize that imperfection is there, and plan for it. If you tell others up front that a particular result is going to be less than perfect, people can be surprisingly accepting.

6. Expand your universe. Seeking out people who challenge you and push you forward could include seeking people who support you with positive messages and safely let you know when you are burned out. During this phase, it may be difficult to expand your network or community by meeting new people. Instead, you may want to focus on pruning out people who don't move you forward.

Exposing yourself to something new is another way to help you out of your burnout. This may mean being open to new ways of doing things.

Family Matters

Many women enter a phase where family matters consume them so they have to find a way to integrate this with their work. For most, it's marriage or parenthood, but even single women can have situations where work takes a back seat to family.

Skills for Living The Orange Line

Instead of getting bogged down by the extra demands of this phase, practice Orange Line skills to give yourself more options.

1. Recognize when the Feminine Filter is at work. The Feminine Filter is often loudest when you have family responsibilities. Because women have accepted that women need to take care of home and family, when they attempt to include career as well, the pressure to implement the Feminine Filter increases both internally and externally.

For example, you might hear, "It's best for children when their mother is at home with them." You could reframe this to say something like, "My career is important as well as my family, and they are not mutually exclusive. Men do it consistently, and it's feasible for me as well."

2. Bring yourself into the equation. With a growing family, learning to bring you into the equation is both harder and more essential. But when women are comfortable setting boundaries and not worrying about being judged, they can accomplish many things.

At this stage, the first impulse in asking for what you need is often to ask for some kind of work-flexibility program. Usually this results in a cut back in pay or advancement. Instead, you might need to remove some less important projects from your plate or find flexibility between the lines at your job.

3. Develop self-awareness. Once women have children or care for a parent, a new layer of who they are appears. Women often have to reset and learn a lot of new aspects of who they are and what they find important.

One way to get perspective is to solicit feedback. We are not talking about feedback concerning your parenting style but feedback about how parenting has changed you.

You may also want to experiment with the traditional spoils of motherhood. You may actually be looking forward to baking cupcakes, and if anyone tries to make you believe those things are bad, you can push back. The key is to make space so you can enjoy these activities and not fall into the "ideal" mother trap.

4. Build a support system. This is probably the most difficult, yet most necessary, skill once the family arrives. As in other stages, first acknowledge that you need help. Help is an investment. The more time and creative energy you free up now to spend pursuing career interests and/or enjoying your family, the better off you will be in the long term.

At home, anything that doesn't result in direct, engaged interaction with family members or rejuvenates your energy could be considered for outsourcing or, at least, shared with others. Outsourcing is not just about hiring help. It's about getting help you need. Joining a local Mom's Club or church group can expose you to other people in your same circumstances who can share tasks.

5. Get comfortable operating in imperfection. Work is messy. Kids are messy. Life is messy. Knowing life is messy and unbalanced helps you realize you didn't do anything wrong to make it that way.

Often as parents, women assume they must be perfect so their children turn out perfectly. But what message are they sending their children with this? By allowing imperfection, they give their children the space to be imperfect as well. And by allowing themselves to be imperfect, women can also learn to accept imperfection in others.

6. Expand your universe. When you have children or are caring for a parent, the world can get very small quickly. Seek out people you want as role models. If you

expand your thinking, you can use your skills at work and home to improve your life on both fronts.

No matter how you define family, this stage may be the most disruptive to your *métier*. The key is to know yourself, take risks and step outside of your comfort zone. By staying flexible and broadening your options, you can get the support you need to embrace family, career and life on The Orange Line.

The Sabbatical

Many women make a conscious decision to take a break from work for an extended period of time.

Life on sabbatical is very different from the hectic pace of working life. Women have the time to go inward to find their joy and affirm their values and aspirations long-term. Reasons for taking a sabbatical include motherhood, care of other family members, a less-than-perfect work situation, layoff, a spouse's relocation or just for fun.

Skills for Living The Orange Line

A sabbatical can potentially have negative financial or emotional impacts. However, you can use the Orange Line skills during this stage to ensure you're making the most of your sabbatical and that you'll be prepared to return to work when you're ready.

1. Recognize when the Feminine Filter is at work. Even when you take a sabbatical, the Feminine Filter can work its magic to tell you how you "should live." For example, the Feminine Filter assumption that "I'm never good enough" could manifest as "I feel guilty about not working. I really shouldn't be taking a sabbatical."

Reframing this kind of thinking could sound like, "I chose to take an Orange Line Sabbatical for a reason. As long as this reason is still valid, then what I chose is important."

2. Bring yourself into the equation. When you're not working, there's a temptation to absorb other people's needs and priorities. It helps to keep articulating, out loud, why you're taking a sabbatical and what your goals are during this period. Setting clear expectations about what you're willing to do in this stage is critical. Try looking at it as if you were being paid. If you hired someone for this job, you'd set clear boundaries and expectations of the job.

As you practice bringing yourself into the equation, you show others and yourself: I am important, too.

3. Develop self-awareness. Taking a sabbatical provides a unique opportunity to foster self-awareness. You can use the extra time and space to build your professional expertise as well as essential life skills that will keep you living the Orange Line.

Self-assessment at this stage can take the form of questioning yourself: Which aspects of your work, personal and family life do you enjoy? Which do you dislike? What are you really good at? Tools like a continuing education course or a transition firm that provides guidance during a layoff can also help.

4. Build a support system. Being on sabbatical does not mean you do not need help. When you're not working, your first line of support is usually friends and family. Other parents can share in carpools. In you're in school, other students might share team tasks. These relationships can be reciprocal.

It's during sabbatical that women seem to have the most trouble paying for help from anyone, so reframe this. By staying focused, leveraging free help whenever possible and using paid help to keep you focused on your long-term goals, you set yourself up for a stronger re-entry.

5. Get comfortable operating in imperfection. Just like there are no perfect jobs, there is no perfect sabbatical. You may have some initial vision of how things will be. But in reality, things won't always go perfectly.

The first step in living with imperfection is accepting it. Sometimes, you have to accept what life has thrown you. Maybe you've been forced into a sabbatical because your spouse is ill. Or a layoff completely surprises you. Accepting imperfection means that while you may hate the position you've been put in, you will get through it eventually.

6. Expand your universe. One way to expand your universe on sabbatical is to maintain your network of work contacts while you're gone. If at all possible, by being available when they call, even if only to do a small project, you can maintain the connection. Sabbatical is also a time to try new things or take a big risk toward personal growth.

By practicing the skills outlined in this chapter, you can maximize your Orange Line Sabbatical. Because your intention is to return to work, your break needs to include progression both personally and professionally.

Re-Entry

For many women, the time for re-entry after a sabbatical is exciting and stressful at the same time.

Because it's a change, women will face challenges during this phase. Knowing what you want, feeling grounded and confident with your decision, despite some apprehension, helps. The re-entry process is a transition, and Orange Line skills can help you adjust.

Skills for Living The Orange Line

1. Recognize when the Feminine Filter is at work. In re-entry, because you are prioritizing your career again, you may get pushback as others have to adapt. The pushback usually comes in the form of language to move you back into Feminine Filter behavior.

When you start noticing this language from others, you can decide whether you agree and avoid becoming part of someone else's belief system. Remember that you can't change anyone else: You only need to live your own truth.

2. Bring yourself into the equation. After being out of work, you have probably developed routines and filled your time with activities. You will now need to stop doing many of these to devote your time and energy to work again.

Setting expectations up front can be very helpful. While family members might have been excited about the re-entry, they may not have fully appreciated how their world could change. By having direct conversations about your intentions and expected changes, you can get the support you need.

3. Develop self-awareness. Self-awareness is a critical skill during the re-entry phase to help you clear the slate and position yourself for long-term success. Because it can be an emotional transition, you have many opportunities to get to know yourself more deeply.

You can use feedback from others and personal insight to create your own unique self-development plan. At this stage, it can incorporate re-entry or even become a full career plan. This can help you determine which jobs to consider upon re-entry and give you better ways of dealing with stressful situations.

4. Build a support system. Building a support system now means creating the net that supports you in the re-entry process. You need to figure out what you need and how to get it, including resume help, coaching, domestic support, schooling and whatever else you need for your transition.

5. Get comfortable operating in imperfection. Because re-entering is a transition process, accepting and embracing imperfection will make the change easier. You can give yourself permission to make mistakes or have suboptimal days.

You can expect, initially, to act in ways that are incongruous with organizational norms. You can embrace imperfection by showing your ability to learn as you gradually understand the organizational culture, as well as adapting to changes at home.

6. Expand your universe. In this stage, you have spent time away from your career. By leveraging what you've learned during that time off, you can decide how to expand your universe of options and be even more creative in the future.

Re-entry after a sabbatical is something many women will do. To transition effectively, you have to expect and respect the noise from others and know what you want. You also need to accept that the first year after re-entering is likely to involve considerable skill development and negotiation at work and at home.

The Mid-Career Transition

It sounds cliché, but many women reach a point where they suddenly feel the need to switch career direction midstream. Whether a milestone birthday prompts a realization that you haven't done things the way you wanted to, or an inner voice tells you you're not fulfilled, it's never too late to break free of stale routines.

Underneath the opportunities and self-discovery of this period may be problems that can affect your long-term career and personal life. For example, it can be hard to figure out what you really want to do.

Skills for Living The Orange Line

Getting a job in a new field can be difficult, or you may have to start at the bottom. Orange Line skills enable you to be successful in your new trajectory.

1. Recognize when the Feminine Filter is at work. When you begin to realize that something needs to change in your career, you need to be able to figure out whether and how the Feminine Filter is influencing your thinking.

2. Bring yourself into the equation. There may be a lot of pressure now to do what other people think is best for you. You may feel pressured to change jobs or "follow your passion" before you even know what that means for you. It's important to become comfortable pushing back and saying "no" to this external pressure.

It's also important to ask for what you need at this stage. If it's time and space, ask for it. You must also ensure your career is on the right track by practicing self-promotion and self-care. It's your responsibility to learn and understand the value that you bring to the table.

3. Develop self-awareness. Understanding who you have become in your life and career to date can help you make better decisions at this stage. It's crucial to be familiar with your true likes, dislikes, strengths and weaknesses.

Armed with more awareness, you're ready to create your own unique self-development plan. You may find you don't need to change fields completely. You may need to upgrade your education. At this stage, you have the opportunity to launch yourself in a completely new

direction or derail yourself. Understanding yourself can positively influence your outcomes.

4. Build a support system. When you embark on a major career shift, you will surely need support. A career transition is a big deal. At this stage, it's time to reconsider your attitudes toward securing the help that transitions most often require.

Once you accept that you need help, figure out exactly what help you need. Think of this transition phase as a job. As such, you need to reserve your time and creative energy for the job, rather than spending it on non-productive tasks. No one will take you seriously, including your family or prospective employers and clients, if you treat your search for work like a hobby.

5. Get comfortable operating in imperfection. Life isn't perfect, and there wasn't some perfect path you were supposed to have followed. Even if you're unhappy in your career right now or if you were laid off, you have not failed.

When you lose the idea that things have to be perfect, you open yourself to more creative options. You can embrace imperfection as an opportunity to try new things with the expectation that trying your best is the goal, not perfect results.

6. Expand your universe. When you are trying to figure out how to remake your career, you must look at your change from fresh vantage points. It may be helpful to associate with other people going through the same thing because you can empathize and work together.

This stage is sometimes about taking risks and stepping outside of your comfort zone. Especially in midlife, this can be extremely difficult to do. But once you get past your fears and perceived limitations, expanding your universe can open you to possibilities you never thought available.

Successfully navigating the transitions of midlife offers endless possibilities. Nonetheless, there are considerations, including being strategic about the process, exploring alternatives, flexibility, adaptability and mitigating the risk before you jump.

PART III: CONTINUING TO LIVE AN ORANGE LINE LIFE

Living The Orange Line

Women consistently say they want to live an integrated, well-paced life. Women want to live on the Orange Line.

As we've shown, you can reframe your core assumptions across all the stages of your career. As you do so, you can then implement the three core principles of Orange Line living:

- **Do what's required.** You focus on tasks that add value to the organization, your family or yourself.
- **Do what's right.** You figure out what's right for you physically, emotionally and spiritually, while honoring and respecting others.
- **Be authentic.** You are aligned with your values and are not easily persuaded to behave in a way that feels contrary, is taxing or unrewarding.

You might find the Orange Line often does not yield external success as fast as the Green line, but if you have patience, the results will come.

How Do You Practice Orange Line Skills?

It's not possible for anyone to wake up one day and be an expert at The Orange Line skills. By making incremental changes, you can get comfortable with fears and move on to hope and building confidence.

Your new habits and skills enable an Orange Line life. By practicing them, you start to operate on new principles. You realize that you cannot control other people or "the system." You can control only yourself and your response. You learn it is only by changing yourself that you can eliminate the Feminine Filter's effects and change your destiny. You replace the bad habits and rules of the Feminine Filter with this new belief system:

I AM important. I AM allowed to achieve my métier.

If you implement this one belief, just this one, you will change everything. Change will occur, not by pushing and shoving the world's decision-making systems to change, but by women simply asking for and expecting their needs to be met. You are the change you seek.

By doing this collectively, women can finally break through to more powerful roles and change the system around them. And most importantly, they can live a full, integrated life.

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The Orange Line*, you'll also like:

1. ***Break Your Own Rules*** by Kathryn Heath, Mary Davis Holt and Jill Flynn. The authors distill the six faulty assumptions (or "rules") most women follow that get in the way, and provide new rules to clear the path.

2. ***Make It Matter*** by Scott Mautz. By making work matter, people become more committed to their jobs. Mautz offers tools and plans to create meaning in and at work.

3. ***The 5 Choices*** by Adam Merrill, Leena Rinne and Kory Kogon. Learn the 5 Choices that will empower individuals to make more selective, high-impact choices about where to invest their time, attention and energy.

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39-07 Work Without Stress

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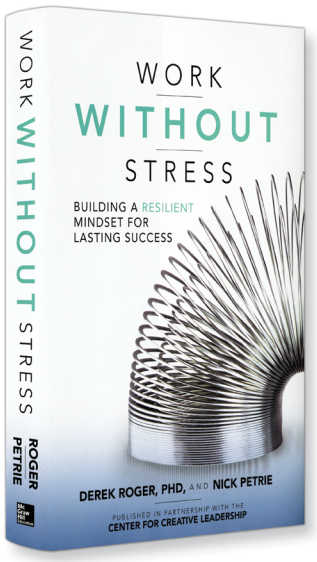
March 2017

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Executive Book Summaries®

Career & Self-Development

Work Without Stress

Building a Resilient Mindset for Lasting Success



by Derek Roger, Ph.D. and Nick Petrie

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

If you're like most people, you probably think that stress is an inevitable part of life. The truth is it's not. In a groundbreaking 30-year study, Dr. Derek Roger has discovered that everything we think we know about stress and how we should "manage" it is just plain wrong.

Stress is not a natural response to the pressures of work. It's a choice that you make, consciously or not, to worry and fret and agonize over the work you need to do instead of just doing it. Why do some people get stressed while others stay calm, cool and collected under pressure? The answer lies in resilience — your ability to cope with challenges and thrive under adversity — rather than ruminating and obsessing over them. The key to "managing" stress is to stop it before it starts. To be resilient, flexible and ready for anything.

Work Without Stress offers a radically different approach to stress. It's about being resilient. Flexible. Mentally awake and in the moment. It's about changing your mindset to keep things in perspective instead of adding fuel to the fire with negative thoughts. The techniques you'll find in this book are powerful, practical and proven to work — without stress.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why stress is not an inevitable part of life.
- The difference between pressure and stress.
- To control your attention and become more resilient.
- To practice resilient communication and lead organizational change without stress.

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Vol. 39, No. 3 (3 parts), Part 2, March 2017 • Order #39-07

THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **WORK WITHOUT STRESS**

by Derek Roger, Ph.D. and Nick Petrie

The authors: Derek Roger, Ph.D., is a U.K. Chartered Psychologist who specializes in the physiology of stress. The results of his original research challenged conventional ideas about stress and resilience and led to the creation of the unique and innovative training program Challenge of Change Resilience Training. Nick Petrie is a senior faculty member at the Center for Creative Leadership. He works with CEOs and their teams to create resilience strategies for their organizations, particularly in periods of significant change.

From *Work Without Stress: Building a Resilient Mindset for Lasting Success* by Derek Roger, Ph.D. and Nick Petrie. Copyright © 2017 by Derek Roger, Ph.D. and Nick Petrie. Summarized by arrangement with the publisher, McGraw-Hill Education. 224 pages, $30, ISBN: 978-1-259-64296-8. To purchase this book, go to Amazon.com.

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A New Way to Think About Stress and Resilience

Nearly every day you'll hear people complain that they're stressed — about their job, their boss, their partner, their children. We've become conditioned to thinking that *my* stress is caused by *other* people and events, but think for a moment: Can you get rid of all of these people and events from your life? You can't, and that makes stress a constant feature. You've also made yourself a victim, with your unhappiness dictated entirely by others.

This is the basic idea of managing stress: that it is a part of life that you have to learn to control and cope with. But this is just a myth: Stress isn't something you have to learn to live with. You can be completely free of it. You're probably thinking you've heard all this before. Conventional stress management has been around for a long time, and it has made no difference at all. But if you look more closely, the reason it doesn't work is because it is based on fundamentally wrong principles. What is needed is not just another relaxation technique but a whole new way of defining stress: a shift in the paradigm of what we think stress is.

Here, the emphasis is on *resilience*. This is not simply the capacity to bounce back quickly from situations we think are stressful. To be truly resilient, what's required is a shift in your mindset, so that you can see stress for what it is and choose not to become involved in it.

Pressure and Stress

When you define it properly, stress is never good for you. In fact, all you get from it is a probably shorter and definitely more miserable life.

There are always a few who say that stress energizes and motivates them, but they're not talking about stress at all. The confusion is a result of drawing a false distinction between so-called good and bad stress. Instead, let's distinguish between pressure and stress. This is not just wordplay. Pressure is defined as a "demand to perform." The demand might be intense, but there is no stress inherent in it, and the key to resilience is not to turn pressure into stress.

Pressure starts from the moment you wake up in the morning, when the demand is to get up. If you doze off again, then suddenly jolt awake and realize you're now going to be late for work, pressure increases. You rush to the office, and because you were late, you're one step behind all morning.

Does that sound like stress? It isn't stress at all. It's just pressure. It will become stress only if you add a critical ingredient: *rumination,* specifically *rumination about emotional upset*. If you are late, do you accept that it has happened and then get on as quickly and efficiently as you can, or are you filled with guilt about having slept in, anger at yourself for doing so and fear of the consequences? Do you run red lights in your impatience to get to work, or swear at the driver in front who you think is slow to get going when the lights turn green? That's stress, and it serves no purpose.

The important point here is that you have a choice. You're not genetically programmed to ruminate. It's a habit you've developed and cultivated for years. And because it is habit, it can be changed. The process is very simple, just four steps:

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1. Waking up
2. Controlling attention
3. Becoming detached
4. Letting go

This is not about *stress management*. The term implies that stress is ever present and that it has to be controlled and managed, even supposedly made your friend. This is about *resilience.* Resilience is not about being able to keep your head above water but realizing that there's no water to keep your head above. Resilience can be defined as the ability to negotiate the rapids of life without becoming stressed.

Thinking over a problem to arrive at a solution is called *reflection,* but to be able to reflect requires taking a detached perspective. This is not to suggest adopting a superficial or unengaged way of problem solving — the thinking about it might be pretty intense, but what it doesn't include is negative emotion. With reflection, what-if becomes, "What if we tried this approach? Hmm, maybe not. What else could we try?" When negative emotion is added, what-if becomes, "What if we fail? What if I lose my job? What if my family ends up on the street?" What is missing from reflection is catastrophizing.

Waking Up

When the alarm rings, you wake up, get out of bed and start preparing for the day. But how awake are you? Are you conscious of washing, dressing and having breakfast, or is it all happening on autopilot? All the while you may be thinking about what you need to do today, whom you may meet and so on. You'd probably call this "planning." Dressing, making breakfast and the rest are things you've done every day for years, so they don't require much thought, and you can focus your attention on your plans for the day. Problem is, you can become so engrossed in the plans that the toast burns and the eggs turn hard-boiled!

What varies all the time in the process of performing tasks is the extent to which we control and give attention. When we're seemingly awake but have had our attention snatched away, that is called *waking sleep.* Waking sleep is the same as becoming engrossed in a daydream. Everyone does it, but the question is, how much time do you spend in it?

We all recognize waking sleep, and we also recognize the panic that can come from being caught in our reverie. This leads to the next step after drifting into pleasurable waking sleep: the addition of *negative emotion.* After a meeting, are you preoccupied with what the rest of the team thinks about you? Do you continue to elaborate on the theme, worrying about what your boss might think, eventually ending in the nightmare scenario of losing your job, not being able to pay the mortgage and leaving your family destitute? What you've moved into is a state of ruminating about emotional upset.

Rumination is the constant churning over of what-ifs and if-onlys. It's what causes stress. Without rumination, there is no stress, and rumination serves no purpose at all. Waking sleep is the idle dream, which unfortunately can be elaborated easily into the nightmare of rumination, but we can choose not to do it.

Here are five strategies for leaders to reduce rumination, both for yourself and for your team.

1. Connect with your senses. The fastest way to wake up and come back to the present is to literally come to your senses: what you can hear, see, feel, taste and smell. For 30 seconds, listen to the sounds that are close to you and then the quieter ones in the background. Notice the weight of your feet on the floor, the temperature on your face, and the shapes and colors that are around you right now. You can do this only in the present, and when you connect fully, you're wide awake.

2. Wake up the people around you. The most effective leaders don't follow along mindlessly. When they see people going through the motions in meetings, they wake them up, not in a way that would embarrass them but by asking the group provocative questions. Working with senior executive teams, one colleague will often ask, "What's the conversation you should be having right now but are avoiding?"

3. Ask direct reports questions about right now. Many workers in workplaces suffer over things that are not actually happening. In the same way, many workers suffer over an organizational change by imagining the worst possible outcomes. They're ruminating. When you see people caught up in the future like this, you can help short-circuit their thinking. The way to do it is not to dismiss their feelings but to bring the conversation to the question, "What problem are you experiencing, right now?" This offers something actual and practical you and they can work on directly.

4. Ask yourself, "What's the opportunity in front of me right now?" One reason many can't stay awake for very long is because they don't value what's in front of them. Ask yourself, "What is the opportunity I have with this person right now?"

5. Start doing walk-and-talk meetings. One of the features of highly rated leaders is that their people feel comfortable sharing their emotions with them, whether positive or negative. However, the downside of expressing emotions freely is that sometimes people get stuck talking about the same old problem over and over, without moving to a solution. One of the most effective ways to break your direct reports out of this pattern is to get them to stand up and go for a walk and talk. Breaking people out of their physical patterns — sitting in the same chair in the same office complaining about the same things — and getting them to move can break the cognitive pattern. It is hard for people to stay stuck mentally when they keep taking another step forward physically.

Controlling Attention

Attention is like the beam from a flashlight. Your brain is the flashlight. If someone calls your name, you swing the beam of attention to focus on who is calling and why. The person might have called you to look at a plane flying overhead, and you open your attention up to the sky, searching for it. Once you spot it, you focus your attention on that one point in the sky. Attention varies along a continuum, from sharply focused on one point or wide open to stimuli, but all along the continuum you control and give it intentionally.

Nothing happens without attention. A report arrives on your desk, and instead of dealing with it, you drift off into plans about next weekend. Attention hasn't stopped, but you've lost control of it. In waking sleep, all that attention creates is only dreams; the review of the report that you're supposed to be doing has stopped. Waking up and attending to the report is focusing attention on it.

Being aware of attention is really quite simple: As you're reading this page, be aware that you're paying attention to the text. Acknowledge that you can do anything in a mechanical, automated way, or you can be awake and aware of what you're doing. This brings you out of waking sleep, and it is also what will bring you out of stress.

Although there are efficiency costs in being absent in daydreams, there is no stress involved. The real costs begin when negative emotion is added, transforming the daydream of waking sleep into the nightmare of rumination. Defining stress as rumination provides a new way of thinking about stress, and it offers a simple method to avoid becoming stressed altogether.

Although stress is defined here in terms of emotional upset, there's nothing wrong with emotion. Emotion is part of what makes us human, and almost everything we do involves emotion. For example, different aspects of your job can be ranged along an emotional continuum, from "I hate doing this" to "I love doing that." If you have an inbox, the bottom will be filled with "I hates."

The danger with emotion is not that it occurs but rather that there is potential for you to become involved and overwhelmed by it. The key to resilience is to avoid turning pressure into stress by needlessly adding in negative emotion and feeding it with attention. Emotions won't stop when you become more resilient, but what does become available is a choice about how you continue to respond.

Stressless Leadership

There is no question that leaders in the 21st-century workplace are under increasing pressure. Workplaces are characterized by BOCA conditions:

- **B**lurred boundaries where new technologies mean that work has penetrated all times and locations.
- **O**verload from the volume of work exceeding the ability to keep pace with it.
- **C**omplexity of problems becoming more systemic and difficult to solve.
- **A**ddictive, meaning that many leaders with high-achieving personalities are addicted to the stimulation of work.

And that's just at work. Much of what people describe as workplace stress is actually stress they carry from their personal lives. The opposite is equally true: Rumination won't necessarily stop when you walk through your front door.

With all these pressures, is it possible to lead yourself and your team and be happy at work and at home, without getting completely stressed out? Here are four practical steps leaders can take to enhance their resilience.

1. Help your team differentiate between pressure and stress. Most people think these two are one and the same. They are not. Don't you know some people who face very little pressure in their lives but are very stressed? Don't you also know some people who face a great deal of pressure and yet are not stressed at all? Often the higher people go in the organization, the less stressed they are. You might argue that this is because people at the top have it easier. That could be true, but looked at more closely, the truth is that those who keep getting promoted are most often the ones who can handle more and more pressure without turning it into stress.

2. When you wake up from ruminating, ask the question, "How useful was that?" Many believe that rumination needs to be maintained because it has some useful purpose. Once you start to see that your ruminations serve no purpose, the grip that these pointless, negative thoughts have over you starts to release.

3. Scratch the rumination record. Rumination is like a record. We have favorites that we play over and over in our head without any helpful outcome (" Does my boss hate me?" "What if there are layoffs?"). What we need to do is scratch the record as soon as it starts playing. We do this by interrupting our thoughts as quickly and powerfully as we can. Once you've taken the vital first step of waking up, one of the most powerful ways to maintain this state is to physically move: Stand up and go for a brisk five-minute walk. Don't fall into the trap of spending the entire walk continuing with the rumination. Connect with the present for as much of it as you can. The way to do that is to remain connected to your senses.

4. Turn rumination into reflection. Reflection is essential for good leadership, while rumination is disastrous. When you catch yourself thinking about something, stop and ask yourself, "Am I reflecting in a positive or neutral way, or am I ruminating and making myself stressed?" The former helps you create direction, alignment and commitment for your team. The latter will lead to a short, miserable life. Choose wisely!

Becoming Detached and Letting Go

The more you practice staying awake for as long as you're able to whenever you do wake up, the more frequently it happens and the longer it lasts. The fact is that attention will drift off as your mind looks for stimulation, but it is equally true that it will become increasingly easier to wake up and connect again.

Drifting off is bound to happen more frequently with repetitious tasks that you don't enjoy doing, but you will also have experienced the ease with which attention can be controlled and held: Think back to the last time you were engaged in an activity you really loved and how easy it was to stay connected. In those circumstances the potential distractions or thoughts just pass by. To be able to do this, you are in fact taking the last two steps in the program, becoming detached and letting go.

For many, detachment conjures up a sense of being disengaged and separate, of not caring. But detachment means *being able to maintain perspective.* Detached people don't turn molehills into mountains, while those who are not detached endlessly catastrophize and blow everything out of proportion. A lack of detachment and the tendency to ruminate are intertwined in a spiral of stress: When you ruminate, things balloon out of proportion, and when things are out of proportion, you're more likely to ruminate. This clarifies the distinction between rumination and reflection: *You can reflect only when you're detached.*

The simplest way to explore detachment is to link it to the fourth and final step in the program, letting go. Until you wake up, you remain locked in the nightmare of rumination, but once awake and back in the present, you have the opportunity to regain control of your attention, to put things in perspective and to let go of the negative emotion with which the issue has become entangled.

But letting go doesn't mean doing nothing. It's about doing the job without the contamination of negative emotion. This is why detachment is not just a form of avoidance. The thoughts do intrude into your mind, but instead of blocking them out or fixating on them, you're observing and acknowledging them as just thoughts, and you're letting go of them by not continuing to feed them with attention.

Here are six specific strategies for developing these skills.

1. Approach work with high intent, low attachment. All leaders need to work out for themselves and their teams how to set high standards without a fear of failure. By focusing on your intent rather than a specific outcome, you acknowledge that there are many factors that impinge on your work that you can't control, which will enable you to pursue your intent without being held hostage by your attachment to the end result. What is the highest intent you have for your leadership?

2. Use humor to put work back in its place. Each day we're presented with people and events that, taken together, can convince us that our work is incredibly important. Occasionally we all need a reminder that puts it back in perspective. One manufacturing company is full of driven individuals who are deeply committed to hitting their numbers, but when someone wakes up and realizes they're all starting to take it all too seriously, they'll say something like, "Guys, we make milk cartons!" There's a moment's hesitation before everyone laughs and goes back to their task, but awake and with a proper perspective.

3. Compare the current situation to your life experiences. Sometimes we end up ruminating because we forget how small the current issue is in the scope of our whole life. One of the fastest ways leaders get out of

rumination is by contrasting a current event (an unhappy colleague) with bigger, tougher, more consequential events they have gone through in their lives.

4. Ask yourself three questions when you are in crisis. People who struggle to detach often ask themselves very unhelpful questions: "Why did this happen to me?" "Why can't I be more successful?" To break that habit, ask yourself these questions instead:

- What's funny about this?
- What's great about this?
- What's the opportunity here?

The quality of your life and leadership is a lot about the quality of the questions you ask yourself right now: There is always something about every situation that is funny, great and opportune. The challenge is whether or not you ask the right questions to uncover them.

5. Clarify who actually owns the problem. One behavior that is guaranteed to start you ruminating is failing to differentiate between other people's problems and your own. The most effective leaders begin by seeing that the other person owns the problem, not them. They listen with full attention, enabling the person to express fully how upset he or she feels. Then they ask smart questions to help guide the best actions to follow, but when the person leaves the room, any emotions they are still holding leave as well.

6. Teach your teams how to use SBI feedback. One reason many people find it hard to let go is because they feel an emotion, but they don't know how to express it appropriately. To help leaders resolve this problem, the Center for Creative Leadership teaches a method called Situation, Behavior and Impact (SBI) Feedback, which is delivered in three simple steps:

- Situation. Describe the precise time and place where the behavior occurred (for example, "in our client meeting this morning").
- Behavior. Say what the person did or said (for example, "You told the clients that I would fly back to meet them anytime they wanted").
- Impact. Say how you felt as a result (for example, "I was surprised and felt concerned").

SBI enables emotional expression in the context of a detached perspective, and it facilitates letting go of the emotions and moving forward, often with a stronger relationship as a result.

Developing a Resilient Personality

Research reveals eight different habitual behaviors that all contribute in some degree to making people more or less resilient. Of the eight measures, rumination is the most important. The behaviors that characterize the scales are described below, and if you recognize features of them in yourself that you feel you need to change, each description is followed by pointers on what you can do about it.

1. Rumination. To summarize, rumination occurs when negative emotion is added to what we call waking sleep. It involves continuing to churn over emotional upsets, which prolongs the emotional misery as well as sustaining a perfectly natural physiological response to the point at which it may incur real damage. Rumination isn't a by-product of stress. It is stress. If there's no rumination, there's no stress. Change happens by first gaining understanding and then steadfastly putting change into practice.

2. Emotional inhibition. Emotional inhibition measures the extent to which you bottle up or inhibit emotion. It isn't a measure of how much emotion you experience; everyone experiences emotion. It is whether or not you express it. If you recognize that you do tend to inhibit emotion, are you doing so because of a fear of disclosure, the feeling that opening up will leave you vulnerable and exposed, or experiencing embarrassment when someone else does it? This comes from a mistaken all-or-none idea, that if you don't keep your emotions to yourself, then every conversation is going to turn into a full-blown counseling session. Well, feel the fear and act against it. At the next team meeting when you feel upset about something, say so, but say it from a detached perspective.

3. Toxic achieving. Have you ever had a manager who placed you under constant time pressure to get things done, didn't really care how you got a result as long you got one, and responded to any failure to deliver with impatience and anger? What motivates toxic achieving behavior is the mistaken belief that threats and blame will get work done, and the most difficult aspect of toxic achievers is the second word in the phrase: They do deliver, which is why they're often successful. The catch is that they deliver at significant cost not only to themselves but to their teams. Their people do a good job because they're told to, not because they respect their manager. Dissatisfaction and turnover tend to be high.

If you're always responding to frustration with anger, notice how you'll tend to justify that anger to yourself and to others. Here are good questions to ask yourself:

"Why am I always angry? And why do I think everyone, including me, should be delivering everything yesterday, at whatever cost to anyone else who might be involved? Why am I so identified with being tough?"

4. Avoidance coping. Avoidance involves burying your head in the sand and hoping the issue will just go away. The problem with this strategy is that nothing is resolved. The key to dealing with avoidance is to recognize that it's an emotional response to things you'd prefer not to deal with. The paradox with avoidance is that for many of the things you put off until you eventually have to do them, you often find it is so straightforward and simple that you wonder what the fuss was all about. The issues don't change and become simpler because you avoided them for so long. Why go through all that, alienating people in the process, when you could just have done it when it first arrived?

5. Perfect control. The problem for perfectionists is that they just can't see the threshold of added value, the point in the task beyond which you're adding nothing, no matter how much more detail you attend to. Perfectionism is based on the mistaken idea that there is a perfect outcome for the job. Like avoidance coping, perfect control is driven by emotion — in this case, anxiety. Perfect controllers are anxious about not delivering the perfect outcome, but they're struggling to achieve an ideal. From a practical perspective, the principle is to do the best you're able to under the circumstances, which is what most people do. The anxiety that drives perfectionism inevitably brings with it a desire to control everything. You need to remember that there is one thing that in principle you have control over at all times, and that's your attention.

6. Detached coping. Detached coping is being able to keep perspective. Detached people don't turn molehills into mountains: They don't catastrophize, even when the issues are large and pressing. To be free to act appropriately, we need to let go of the negative emotion we've unnecessarily added. This doesn't mean being unemotional, which is, in any case, impossible.

7. Sensitivity. Picking up quickly and accurately on how others feel forms another of the measures that comprise resilience: sensitivity. Detachment and sensitivity are linked: If you are able to remain detached, it is equally important that you have sufficient sensitivity to be able to read the emotional tone of those you're working with. This pattern is described as detached compassion. A synonym for detached compassion is *empathy.* Sensitivity is acquired by the practice of letting go of the preoccupation with "me," which allows you to see situations from others' perspective. There are many everyday expressions of this, such as being in someone else's shoes. The important point is to remember that they're not your shoes! In other words, picking up on how someone might be feeling shouldn't lead to your taking on the emotion yourself.

8. Flexibility. Flexible people are able to adapt more quickly and easily to change, while inflexible people dislike change and would prefer things to remain the way they are. The fact is that everything changes all the time, and having a flexible response to change is essential. If you are inflexible, here's the question: what is it about change that provokes your negative emotions, especially anxiety?

Resilient Communication and Leading Change

Let's explore how we can apply the same four steps of waking up, controlling attention, becoming detached and letting go to developing more effective ways to communicate. A key element in facilitating change is being able to communicate effectively, and good communication is especially important in avoiding misunderstandings between managers and their teams. These communication techniques will enable managers to begin to behave more like leaders.

The two interrelated conditions under which people in organizations are more likely to ruminate are high uncertainty and a perceived lack of control. Because both conditions are common during times of large-scale change, it is important that leaders communicate in a way that reduces rather than fuels these conditions. Leaders themselves are usually experiencing the same challenges as their people, so they need to be particularly mindful not just of the words they use but also their body language and tone of voice: They may be communicating more than they think.

Here are some specific strategies that can be used to improve leaders' communication skills.

Communicate the four Ps of the change. William Bridges, a leading researcher on change, points out that there are 4 Ps that people want to know during any change:

- **Purpose.** "Why are we making this change? What is the rationale behind it?"
- **Picture.** "What is the end state we are trying to get to?"
- **Plan.** "What are the steps we need to take to get there?"
- **Part.** "What is my role in the change? How do I help?"

Talk more about what is not changing. During new organizational initiatives, leaders often are told that they should be communicating constantly about the change. While this initially sounds right, it often leads to unnecessary anxiety as people come to believe that more is changing in the organization than really is. The fact is that during most change initiatives, the majority of things will stay exactly the same: You will work at the same desk, sit with the same people and use the same computer to do the same job. The paradox for the leader is that the bigger the change, the more you have to emphasize what is stable.

Acknowledge self-motivation: an antidote to micromanaging. Managers sometimes complain that one or more of their staff is not sufficiently motivated. Instead of complaining about the lack of motivation, find out why. The first principle here is to assume that everyone wants to do his or her best. If that's the case, what's become the obstacle to that happening? If you respect your people and they respect you, then when you arrange to meet a team member to find out why she seems to have gone off the rails, the conversation will not be predicated on blame but rather a genuine effort to help, both for her benefit and that of the team.

Avoid giving team members things to ruminate about. Criticism is almost always perceived as an attack on our self-esteem, and the consequence of criticism will inevitably be rumination by the person on the receiving end. Criticism is never constructive, so avoid giving people things to ruminate about.

Depersonalize communication. Depersonalize communication by making a distinction between the person and her work. Comment only on the work. This all seems self-evident, but managers forget the principle of child-rearing — comment on the behavior, not the child — and vent their frustration and anger on their teams. When employees report in engagement surveys that communication in a company is poor, what they're most often referring to are managers who have created a blaming culture. Blaming cultures are not worth staying in.

Conclusion: Pulling It All Together

The key factor that protects resilient people from stress is that they don't ruminate. Rumination is how stress is defined here, and it provides the foundation for this unique four-step process for developing resilience: waking up, controlling attention, becoming detached and letting go.

The first step, waking up, is challenging. The practice is to stay awake for as long as you can each time, but you have to wake up first. What can you do to maximize it when it happens? It's best to keep it as simple as possible: Complex, multistage strategies are the least likely to be sustained. Most companies have a generic screen saver on work computers, but if you're able to change it, make it into this simple message: WAKE UP. Or create a poster you can pin up at your workstation, reminding you to do the same thing.

Once you have woken up, the second step has in fact been taken — attention is immediately available for you to control. The simplest way to establish attention control is to connect with the present, and the most direct way to do so is to connect with your senses: Self-evidently, they only function in the present. It is all too easy at this point to slip back into the dreamworld, so you need to follow through with the last two steps.

The best way to establish the practice is to do it collaboratively. Get colleagues interested in the approach. Although changing any habitual behavior takes dedication, the principles are so simple that they can be cascaded easily.

Resilience is a skill that everyone benefits from. These benefits are felt individually as well as in the social context of people's families and the organizations they work for.

The key message is that stress is *not* an inherent part of life. The focus is on changing habitual attitudes and behavior that compromise resilience. Here's the most important message: They are just habits. They can be changed, and there is a wealth of evidence showing that change is achievable by anyone, provided that he or she is prepared to practice.

Nobody can become resilient for you. What better time to start than now?

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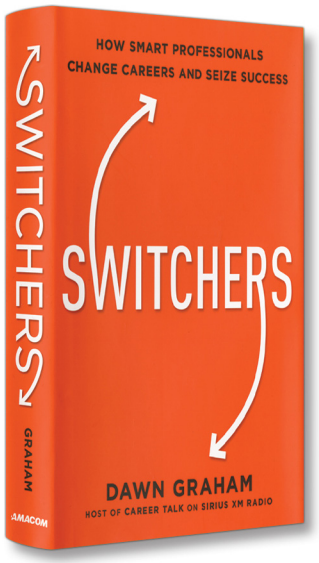
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Career & Self-Development

Switchers

How Smart Professionals Change Careers and Seize Success



by Dawn Graham

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Are you stuck in an unsatisfying job? In the wrong profession? An industry that just isn't a fit? Get unstuck! Land a new career — one you're genuinely passionate about. *Switchers* helps you realize that dream.

Written by celebrated career coach and psychologist Dr. Dawn Graham, *Switchers* provides proven strategies that will get you where you want to go. The first step is to recognize that the usual rules and job search tools won't work for you. Résumés and job boards were designed with traditional applicants in mind. As a career switcher, you have to go beyond the basics, using tactics tailor-made to ensure that your candidacy stands out. You need to understand the concerns of hiring managers — and think like they do; identify transferable skills that companies covet; and convince skeptical employers to shelve their concerns and take a chance on you.

Packed with psychological insights, useful information and expert strategies, *Switchers* helps you leap over obstacles and into a whole new field. Want to pull off the most daring — and fulfilling — career move of your life? Let *Switchers* show you how.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The four foundational attitudes for being a successful Switcher.
- Why having a Plan B may not be a good idea.
- How to rebrand yourself and create "brand ambassadors" to support you.
- To proactively hunt for today's jobs and address interviewers' concerns about Switchers.

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Vol. 41, No. 12 (3 parts), Part 2, December 2018 – Order #40-30

THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **SWITCHERS**

by Dawn Graham

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Switchers: How Smart Professionals Change Careers and Seize Success by Dawn Graham, copyright © 2018 by Dawn Graham, has been summarized by permission of the publisher, AMACOM, an imprint of HarperCollins Leadership. 288 pages, ISBN 978-0-8144-3963-0.

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Introduction

If you're like most Americans, you'll hold about 11 different positions in the course of your career, and each job search might take you six months or longer. The new normal is not only to switch *jobs* but to change *professions* — which isn't easy to accomplish.

When you want to make a 180-degree change, you need a savvy understanding of the art and science of the job search. Career Switchers tend to give up *not* because they lack the skills to excel in their desired profession but because they don't have the proper search strategies and knowledge.

To get optimal results in your career switch, it's important to approach the job search with an informed and empowered mindset. There are a few key elements to this way of thinking. By embracing four foundational attitudes (the four Rs), you won't be tempted to throw in the towel when your dream is still within reach:

Responsibility. You will best engage your job search by adopting an internal "locus of control." This is a psychology term that describes how people view their circumstances. People who are oriented toward an internal locus of control take responsibility for their actions, believe they have some control over outcomes, are proactive and are determined to find ways around obstacles.

Reality. People who attain success work with what *does* happen, not with what *should* happen. During your job search, things may seem unfair, silly or inconvenient, but if you want the job, you need to play the game and find creative ways around these realities. If you can't accept reality, your actions will be misdirected.

Risk. A job search is often ambiguous and anxiety-provoking, and you will be tempted to stay within your comfort zone. This is your brain's misguided effort to keep you safe from potential threats. You must overcome this to switch careers. Risks are inevitable when venturing into unchartered territory, and the best rewards usually come from the greatest risks. No risks, no *results*.

Resilience. At a basic level, the job switch is a series of human interactions that culminate in either an offer or a rejection. This process is rarely logical or linear, and is fraught with bias, assumptions, complexity and rejection. Because of this, it's not enough to apply tactical strategies. As long as your job search involves humans, it involves psychology, so resilience is a must. Without it, you'll run out of motivation to persevere when the road gets rocky.

Choose Your Switch

Are You a Switcher? The "Magic" Equation for Seizing Career Success

Many people who want to switch careers underestimate the nature of the challenge they're accepting. Before doing anything else, take time to think about what type of career Switcher you are.

Here's the basic principle to keep in mind: The further you stray from a "traditional" career trajectory, the harder it is to switch. Knowing the degree of difficulty will help you design your strategy.

An **industry switch** is moderately challenging. An example of this type of switch is to transition from the corporate world to academia.

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Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries® (ISSN 0747-2196), 2 Christy Drive, Suite 302, Chadds Ford, PA 19317 USA. Published monthly. Subscriptions starting at $99 per year. Copyright © 2018 by Soundview, Inc. **Available formats:** Summaries are available in several digital formats. To subscribe, call us at 1-800-SUMMARY, or order online at www.summary.com. Multiple-subscription discounts and corporate site licenses are also available.

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Making a **functional switch** within the same industry is more challenging than an industry shift. For example, an accounting manager in the pharmaceutical industry wants to stay in pharma and become a marketing manager.

The hardest switch to make is the **double switch** — a professional who makes both an industry and functional change at once. For example, someone in a finance role at a bank shifts to an advertising role in media, or a newspaper editor whose job became obsolete becomes a brand marketer in a startup, and a corporate attorney becomes a human resources executive in a growing nonprofit.

Switchers are excited to make a major change, but many aren't so jazzed about the sacrifices that often come with it — like taking a salary cut, dropping levels on the organizational chart or relocating to another city. We grow attached to our comfortable lives and don't want to give them up.

As Switchers, we need to get real with ourselves first. We must acknowledge that many parts of our current careers that we like — such as salary, title or status — will change. The good news is we don't have to relinquish everything, just some things. Ask yourself, "What are my true non-negotiables?"

No matter what your dream is, trying very hard — diligently and unwaveringly — is absolutely necessary; yet it's not sufficient. You need the magic equation:

Targeted Career Goal + Hard Work + Unknown Factor = Success

The "unknown factor" in this equation is luck, timing, contacts or something else altogether. You might not find that reassuring because it means your future depends, in part, on something beyond your control. But to succeed, you must both work very hard and have faith that the unknown factor will come along if you persist.

On days when faith in your career switch wavers, remember: Milton Hershey started three candy companies, all of which failed, before Hershey's chocolate became a household name. And Tim Ferris' book *The 4-Hour Workweek* was turned down by 25 publishers before it became a best-seller.

The Psychology of the Job Search (and How to Use It to Your Advantage)

To change is to lose — and humans hate loss. We hate it so much there's a psychological term for it. According to Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, *loss aversion* refers to people's tendency "to feel losses more deeply than gains of the same value." It's why we begin to second-guess our choice when making a major career switch. We don't want to lose what we've already invested to get where we are in our career.

So, even though you're excited about a career switch, your mind can quickly shift to what you might lose versus what you might gain — and your motivation may wane. But it's important to remember that loss is a risk in any investment equation.

Keep in mind that hiring managers are affected by loss aversion, too. Most people assume that a hirer's primary goal is to choose the best candidate, but initially the hirer is more motivated to avoid loss. The cost of a bad hiring decision can be significant, which is a setback for Switchers. Since you'll automatically be perceived as riskier, a hiring manager will tend to go with a safer candidate to avoid risking loss.

Just being aware of this gives savvy Switchers a clear advantage. Structure your search strategy to address the concerns of your audience, something that every job seeker *should* do but a Switcher absolutely *must* do.

Bias. As a recruiter is scanning for differences, his or her brain's negativity bias and deference to habit kicks in full force. And biases, while unfair, are the recruiter's primary tool for reducing the résumé pile. As a Switcher, you're an easy target to weed out, even if you make it to an interview. No matter what your target market is, do your research and understand the pain points your audience is facing. Be ready to show how you'll use your transferable skills to implement solutions. Resist the urge to get defensive, and rather show empathy: If you were about to hire a Switcher, you'd likely have similar concerns.

Emotions. Business decisions have become more data-driven. While a positive correlation does exist between gathering valid data and making smart hires, with humans involved in the hiring process there's no getting around the role emotions play in swaying outcomes.

Make it simple for the hirer to see the connection between the skills you bring and the bottom line for the company. Her gut will interpret that feeling as relief because her problems will soon be solved. Her brain translates that into the conclusion, "Hire this person!" Add a positive attitude and likability, and you're golden!

Clarify Your Plan A

If You Don't Invest, Why Should They? Figure Out Your Plan A

When people feel anxiety, they often cope by creating a Plan B — a backup strategy they can engage if Plan A doesn't work out as they were hoping. Having a backup plan is a great idea in some situations, like when there's an impending blizzard or you're trying a new recipe for a dinner party.

But in a job search it can mean a longer transition time or, worse, settling for a role that's not what you want. After all, if you're creating a Plan B, in essence, you *expect* your Plan A to fail. There are no guarantees of success if you go in 100 percent. However, there is a high likelihood of failure if you go in at less.

Go all in or you may never know what's possible. Do your homework and have faith in your abilities. You'll get much further, much faster if you give 100 percent.

Most people begin figuring out their next career move by looking at the common ground among their interests, their expertise and the market. Let's examine this from the Switcher's point of view.

Interests. For career changers, "follow your passion" is risky advice, because it usually causes enormous stress. It narrows the search to just one right option, when in today's market that is far from the norm. Most professionals have several jobs throughout their lives, and more goes into job satisfaction than interesting work, such as colleagues, culture, environment, commute, autonomy, boss and compensation. While "follow your passion" is a great motto for life, for your career you should follow your professional energy, which will never lead you astray.

Think about a work accomplishment you're proud of and focus on the parts of the project or situation that truly energized and motivated you. Maybe you loved the camaraderie of working in a collaborative team, the challenge of using your analytic abilities to solve a challenging puzzle, or the buzz of working against the clock to meet a deadline.

Review a few more accomplishments in this way, and then look for patterns in your energy across all the projects. This can help you refine your next career steps.

Expertise. You've gathered a wide array of valuable skills from all the roles you've held, no matter what your titles. To best position yourself as a qualified Switcher, take a closer look at those skills to determine which are marketable and add value to your new employer. Taken together, those marketable skills are your related expertise.

Once you identify the basic ingredients that make up your expertise, reassemble those ingredients to speak to your new audience. Show how you can solve the pain points in their company. It's likely you have more transferable skills than the hirer initially realizes, and you need to do the work to spell those skills out for the employer.

Market. Many job seekers pay close attention to their interests and expertise but neglect to keep tabs on the market. This is a mistake because there needs to be a customer for what you're selling. Follow companies online through social media, read industry publications, pay attention to business news, scan job boards to see who is hiring and for what roles (this is one of the few times online job boards can be useful!) or simply Google the industry. The internet has made this process much simpler. So don't move forward blindly.

Creating a solid Plan A takes introspection, research and analysis. You'll know you have a clear target when you are able to clearly describe the following to your network: target industry, target function or department, target title or position, target level, target duties or responsibilities, target companies, target geography, target culture, target size, target compensation, target pain points you'll solve, target skills you'll use to solve them and target network.

Change Isn't Linear: Mapping Your Path to a Career Switch

Many Switchers go through a few iterations of their Plan A. Shaping and redefining the details as you go is completely normal, and after all, this is a new career. You may have researched it ad nauseam but haven't yet experienced it, so there is a lot to still learn.

This doesn't mean you should shift course with every new piece of data; simply remain open to novel information, and adjust where needed while staying true to your target.

The stepping-stone switch. Some double switches are tougher to complete in one fell swoop. For these, you may consider a "stepping stone switch" — taking an interim job on the way to your ultimate career goal. If you choose this stepping-stone option, you'll want to research the company culture before accepting an offer. Do they encourage growth from within? Are they supportive of functional switches? If not, you may get pigeonholed into your current role and be unable to successfully complete the double switch.

Should I go back to school? For some career switches, the path is clear cut: If you want to be a dentist or therapist, you'll have to pursue formal education to earn the necessary credentials. For others, there is more to consider: If you want to switch industries or functions (or both) within business, you need to consider the return on investment. Sinking thousands of dollars and possibly years

of time into additional education may or may not open the doors you expect it to. Consider these questions:

- Are you pursuing a degree to make your job search easier?
- Does the program offer internships or other real-world projects where you can build hands-on experience?
- Will the debt you incur put you in a challenging financial situation once you finish school?
- Can you build experience in other ways, like volunteering, self-created internships or shadowing an expert?
- Is it possible an advanced degree will make you overqualified for the role you're seeking?

Gigs and portfolios. The "gig economy" is on the rise, and it's not uncommon for individuals to create a portfolio of gigs to earn a living. You can be a restaurant manager on weekends, adjunct science professor on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and custom web designer on demand. The sky's the limit when you engage your creativity. With more companies open to contract and part-time work, you may be able to get access to your dream role on an experimental or trial basis.

Craft Your Brand Value Proposition

(Re)brand or Be Branded: Craft Your Professional Identity

Over the course of your career, the people you interact with subconsciously notice and catalogue several factors about you through your actions, and then judge and categorize them to determine what becomes your reputation — that is, your brand. This vast array of factors includes written and spoken interactions, body language and tone, social media, marketing and advertising, associations, appearance, hobbies, environment, actions, attitudes and worldviews.

Everything you put out into the world adds to the overall picture of your brand, whether you do it consciously or not. Are you the unofficial technology whiz colleagues seek out when their computers crash? Are you regularly five minutes late? Is your door always closed? Can you be counted on to be the one who celebrates others' achievements?

You cannot pick and choose which behaviors are included in, and which are excluded from, others' perceptions of you. Everything counts and culminates into your brand.

For Switchers, rebranding is essential. You want potential employers to visualize you as a fit for your chosen role and take a chance on you as a nontraditional candidate. This means you need a clear, consistent brand that aligns well with your target.

Step 1: Know your goal and your audience's pain points. Clearly answer the question, "What do I want to be known for and by whom?" For example, if you'd like to transfer to your company's office in Berlin, you may want to be known for your fluency in German. Your audience will be the hiring decision-makers and your network contacts, and you want to know a lot about them so you can show how your contributions will solve their pain points.

Step 2: Know the product (you!). In a job search, *you* are the product you're selling. It can be helpful to first lay out all your current and former roles, achievements and personal characteristics to get a complete picture of everything that can be used to create your new brand. Determine what will be of most interest to your new target audience.

Step 3: Know your differentiators. You have a unique selling point, or USP, that sets you apart from others who do similar work. No matter what your profession or background, something will set you apart from the competition in your field. Some examples might be that you are bilingual or multilingual, have a rare combination of industry skills (lawyer and MBA), or possess an unusual outside accomplishment (you are an Olympian or Grammy winner). Your USP will help you answer the question, "Why should we hire you over the other qualified candidates?"

Step 4: Identify your brand value proposition. Your brand value proposition (BVP) describes how you solve your audience's pain points. Essentially, a BVP pulls together all the pieces discussed above to create a guidepost for how you introduce yourself, what you choose to post online, the circles you need to network into, the projects you take on, how you show up and much more. It will be the reason a hiring manager selects you.

Step 5: Test and evaluate. A final yet critical part of creating a successful brand is ensuring that others clearly understand your BVP. Share your BVP with a few trusted colleagues and friends, and ask if it resonates. Use an analogy for jobs that are more challenging to describe. For example, "I translate code for computers in the same way that a language interpreter converts

French into English." Include a brief example that people can relate to, which deepens their understanding and helps your brand hit home.

Your Career Story: Where Reason Meets Intuition

When a company identifies a market need and decides to hire an employee, they will be evaluating three things in potential candidates: their ability to perform the work (the "what"), their fit with the company or department (the "how"), and their motivation to pursue this job (the "why").

Hirers will weigh abilities, fit and motivation differently depending on whether they're looking at a traditional candidate or a Switcher, as well as the type of switch the candidate is trying to make (industry, functional or double switch). This is where logic (the "why" of your career story) matters — it can make the difference between getting an offer and getting passed over.

Switchers face much deeper scrutiny into their motivation. When considering a Switcher, hirers are on alert, so they'll wonder about your reasons for making a switch, asking, "Why this role? Why here at our company? And why now at this point in your career?" You'll need strong answers to these questions if you want to earn an offer.

This is where your career story comes in. Your career story is the answer to a common question: "What led you to apply to the open role at our company today?" (Or, to put it another way, "Why do you want this job?") Even if everything else has fallen into place for the hiring manager, this question is the "make it or break it" one that will tip the scales.

A convincing career story should be attention-getting, compelling, logical and genuine. To begin to craft the career story you'll use with your network and potential employers during your career switch, ask yourself these questions:

- Why are you really making this change? Authenticity must be the basis of your answers.
- What aspects of the story will resonate most strongly with your audience?
- How can you make sense of your career history to show a hirer this move is a conscious, planned decision in your trajectory?
- How have the above career steps prepared you for this role? Include transferable skills — boil them down to how they match the needs of the position you're applying to.
- What makes you different (your USP)?
- Lastly, your story might include how this new role supports your future goals.

What Got You Here Won't Get You There: The Proactive Job Search

When the notion of a career change arises, most job seekers begin their search online. But the internet has become saturated, and what used to be an effective process is now generally a useless time-suck. The jobs are often picked over, and a robot is making the decisions (through applicant-tracking systems).

Sometimes the job is already spoken for, but in some companies, it's policy to post all jobs publicly and interview external candidates, even if they've already identified a qualified referral or internal candidate. Also, everyone's applying. Jobs posted online receive an average of 200 applicants, with top companies receiving even more.

In a *proactive* job hunt, once you have a clear Plan A and solid brand value proposition (BVP), make networking the first step in your process and submitting your résumé the second step. This gets you past the inherent bias, robots and misinformation, to network directly into an interview. It's usually the only path to a career change.

But what about working with a headhunter? For most job seekers, working with a headhunter or executive search consultant has even lower returns than applying online. For a Switcher, it's generally not worth pursuing because headhunters are customarily paid to search for *traditional* candidates.

With these perspectives on applying online and headhunters, adjust your expectations and time accordingly. If you have 12 hours each week for your search, spend at least nine of them talking to your connections and networking, then use the rest for mission-critical research, evaluating your strategy, practicing your messages and building your new brand.

In a job search, not being on social media is the equivalent of not existing. At minimum, you need to have a well-developed profile on a reputable professional site like LinkedIn. Revisit your professional social media profiles to make sure every element is consistent with your new brand and advances your Plan A.

There are several things you can do online to shift your brand from the old to the new. You can build a personal website that demonstrates your skills and passion for your Plan A. You can also create a blog that centers around a core topic in your new field — or, if that feels too audacious, follow industry leaders in your

target field and repost their work, adding your insightful comments for others to view.

You can join online forums, comment or respond to questions posted on sites like Quora, make podcasts, record short videos, or create infographics or other creative media to get noticed.

Create Ambassadors

No Excuses: Your Network Really Is Your Net Worth

A network is the most important tool in the job search arsenal, and it's especially true for Switchers. A network is a group of people you have relationships with, and "relationship" is the key word. Your current network consists of family, friends, neighbors, colleagues or classmates. The good news is that everyone already has a network. You may simply need to expand it, which is less daunting than starting fresh.

Whether you're looking for a new job or a reliable mechanic, networking works the same way: meet and establish the relationship; build trust over time through repeated interactions; exchange mutually beneficial information and resources; ask for help with something this person is qualified to assist with and reciprocate when possible.

The stakes are higher when you're looking for a job, and most people in your inner circle won't have an instant recommendation. This is where second-level contacts come in. Second-level contacts are not in your immediate network; rather, they are people your network contacts know. Research shows that second-level contacts are more effective in a job search than first-level contacts, because they have access to information that you do not. So your goal is to engage the relationships you have already established to get to your second-level and third-level contacts.

Where do you start with networking? You need a structure that is easy to follow and track:

Start with the companies. Research the types of companies (industries, culture, geography, size) that interest you based on your Plan A.

Uncover your current contacts. Use your connections on professional networking sites to identify first- and second-level contacts who are currently (or were previously) employed at companies you're targeting.

Start the conversation. Reach out to your current contacts to relay interest in learning more about their company. If you only find a second-level contact at a company in your LinkedIn search, ask the first-level connection for an introduction.

Get creative. No connections? No problem. If you can find the company on a professional networking site like LinkedIn, search the profiles of current employees and find something you have in common with them. Use this as an entry point to introduce yourself.

Stay in touch. Approach your contacts from a standpoint of exploration and curiosity. Don't push your résumé on them. Be proactive, but allow the relationship to develop naturally. Soon you'll get introductions to others inside the companies that you're targeting.

The New Way to Network: Create Ambassadors

Let's do away with the word "networking" as it relates to the job search and call it "creating ambassadors" instead. Because the key isn't just who you know but also what they know about you and their brand experience with you. You can have one million connections around the world, but if none are willing or know how to advocate for you, then it won't matter. If you're "networking like crazy" in your career transition and it's still not creating results, you're probably having a lot of interactions but not creating ambassadors.

The best way to create ambassadors is to focus on the relationship, not the outcome. To turn a contact into an ambassador, you must make sure the person with whom you're meeting clearly understands your brand value proposition (BVP) and target (Plan A) and forms a favorable impression of you that they can relay clearly to others.

A networking meeting isn't about spewing your credentials and skills onto your unsuspecting contact until her eyes glaze. Instead, select two accomplishments to share that illustrate your Plan A and the value you bring; then focus on learning about your new acquaintance.

Keep the Ball in Your Court

How to Never Have a Bad Interview: What Are They Really Asking?

By the time you get to the interview, you've most likely passed the "basic qualifications" test, so at this point most hiring managers want to know the same general things: Will you be effective in this job, a good fit with the team and motivated to stay? They will also be keen to pick up on any red flags, and as a Switcher, your nontraditional background will likely be a topic of focus.

For every question in the interview, consider "What are they really asking?" (WATRA), and then decide which of your relevant achievements you want to use to answer the question.

For example, for the question "Why are you interested in this job/company?" the WATRA interpretation is, "How do I know this isn't an impulsive career change? I need to understand how this fits into your overall career path and that this isn't just a fluke or running from a bad employment situation." Your response is to share your career story.

For the question, "Have you ever done (X task or Y skill)?" the WATRA interpretation is "This job requires a specific skill set. I'm pretty sure based on your nontraditional background you haven't done this, but I want to hear specifically how you'll be resourceful and overcome this deficiency."

Before diving in with "No, I haven't . . ." answer the question he or she is really asking. For example, "I know the Cybextra program is a core software used by your sales team, and although I don't have direct experience with that system, in my last two roles I was required to learn company-specific technology to be effective in my position and was able to be self-sufficient on the tools within a week of starting. Technology is a lifelong interest of mine, so I enjoy learning new systems and pick them up very quickly."

Always Sleep on It: Get Ready to Negotiate!

In negotiating a job offer as a Switcher, usually the biggest barrier isn't "how"; it's mustering the courage to do it.

If you don't ask for what you want, the answer is always "no." There are other compelling reasons to negotiate a job offer. Even if the initial offer is more than you expected, would you (or your partner or kids) be less happy if you earned 10 percent more each month or had an extra week of vacation? No way!

The salary discussion is your first opportunity to have a real conversation with your new boss. It's an early chance to see if your new manager will advocate for you, which is good to know up front. Negotiating likely will not distance you. It can do the opposite: Having a difficult discussion and finding a mutual solution deepens the relationship.

Also, in some fields, like sales, it can be detrimental not to negotiate. After all, negotiating and influencing are key skills in your new role, so if you skip them, the hiring manager may be concerned.

As a Switcher, you may feel you're not entitled to ask for more money. After all, you were lucky just to get the offer, right? Wrong. If you were offered the job, the company recognizes the value you bring, and they want you to start the job excited and motivated.

Negotiations don't need to focus only on your paycheck. While you want to get your base pay as high as possible as a first step, many other aspects of a compensation package can be negotiated: extra vacation time, relocation dollars, a sign-on bonus, virtual work days, tuition reimbursement, parking costs, start date, association dues — the list goes on.

Even when a hirer says, "This is our best offer," you should still take a day or two to sleep on it. More often than not, you will think of something to negotiate.

There's a lot of excellent negotiating advice available, but be sure to remember this one vital strategy: Go into the negotiation meeting assuming positive intent on the part of the hiring manager.

You may be sending subtle signs of being on the defensive simply because you expect the hiring manager to push back. While it's advisable to prepare your rationale (it will give you the confidence and data support you need), you'll end up with a better outcome by going into the discussion expecting success. Hiring managers anticipate that you will negotiate. Unless your requests are completely unreasonable or presented as demands, managers likely will be happy to revise the offer if they're able.

Victorious Switchers, like all flourishing professionals, are rarely an overnight success. The obstacles are significant, but are they more significant than realizing your career goals? Only you can decide.

If you choose to forge ahead, with persistence, planning and patience, you'll become a successful Switcher.

MORE SV CONTENT ON CAREER & SELF-DEVELOPMENT

Summary: *Managing Up* by Mary Abbajay. *Managing Up* is a guide to figuring out who you are, who your boss is and finding where you meet. It's about building real relationships with people who have influence over your career.

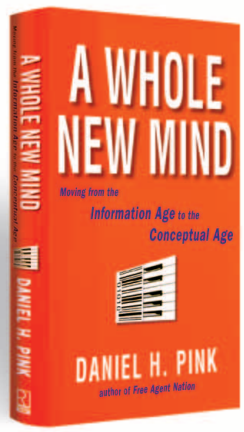
Webinar: *How to Become the Person Others Follow* by Joshua Spodek. Spodek walks you through an integrated progression of exercises designed to cultivate key abilities, behaviors and beliefs through experience. These exercises will help you accomplish the inner work and gain the social skills required for great leadership.

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A Whole New Mind

Daniel H. Pink

SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®



By Daniel H. Pink

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Moving From the Information Age to the Conceptual Age

A WHOLE NEW MIND

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Lawyers. Accountants. Radiologists. Software engineers. That's what our parents encouraged us to become when we grew up. But Mom and Dad were wrong. The future belongs to a very different kind of person with a very different kind of mind. The era of "left brain" dominance, and the Information Age that it engendered, are giving way to a new world in which "right brain" qualities — inventiveness, meaning, empathy — predominate. That's the argument at the center of this summary — a summary that uses the two sides of our brains as a metaphor for understanding the contours of our times.

In the tradition of Daniel Goleman's Emotional Intelligence *and Marcus Buckingham's and Donald O. Clifton's* Now, Discover Your Strengths, *Daniel H. Pink offers a fresh look at what it takes for individuals and organizations to excel. Drawing on cutting-edge research from around the world,* A Whole New Mind *reveals the six essential aptitudes on which professional success and personal fulfillment now depend: Design, Story, Symphony, Empathy, Play and Meaning. It also includes several hands-on exercises and examples culled from experts around the world to help readers sharpen the necessary abilities. This summary will change not only how we see the world but how we experience it as well.*

In addition, this summary will also show you:

- ✓ ***Why a seismic — though as yet undetected — shift is now under way in much of the advanced world.***
- ✓ ***Differences between the left and right hemispheres of our brains.***
- ✓ ***Why three huge social and economic forces — abundance, Asia and automation — are nudging us into the Conceptual Age.***
- ✓ ***Why people who master high concept and high touch are setting the tempo of modern life.***
- ✓ ***How six essential aptitudes can help you make your way across the emerging landscape.***

Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries, P.O. Box 1053, Concordville, PA 19331 USA
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A WHOLE NEW MIND

by Daniel H. Pink

— THE *COMPLETE* SUMMARY

Introduction

The last few decades have belonged to a certain kind of person with a certain kind of mind — computer programmers who could crank code, lawyers who could craft contracts, MBAs who could crunch numbers. But the future belongs to a very different kind of person with a very different kind of mind — creators and empathizers, pattern recognizers, and meaning makers. These people — artists, inventors, designers, storytellers, caregivers, consolers, big-picture thinkers — will now reap society's richest rewards and share its greatest joys.

There is a seismic — though as yet undetected — shift now under way in much of the advanced world. We are moving from an economy and a society built on the logical, linear computer-like capabilities of the Information Age to an economy and a society built on the inventive, empathic, big-picture capabilities of what's rising in its place, the Conceptual Age. This summary is for anyone who wants to survive and thrive in this emerging world — people uneasy in their careers or dissatisfied with their lives, entrepreneurs and business leaders eager to stay ahead of the next wave, parents who want to equip their children for the future, and the legions of emotionally astute and creatively adroit people whose distinctive abilities the Information Age has often overlooked and undervalued.

Six Senses

There are six essential aptitudes—"the six senses"—on which professional success and personal satisfaction increasingly will depend: Design, Story, Symphony, Empathy, Play and Meaning. These are fundamentally human abilities that everyone can master.

A change of such magnitude is complex. But the argument at the heart of this summary is simple. For nearly a century, Western society in general, and American society in particular, has been dominated by a form of thinking and an approach to life that is narrowly reductive and deeply analytical. Ours has been the age of the "knowledge worker," the well-educated manipulator of information and deployer of expertise. But that is changing. Thanks to an array of forces — material abundance that is deepening our nonmaterial yearnings, globalization that is shipping white-collar work overseas, and powerful technologies that are eliminating certain kinds of work altogether — we are entering a new age. It is an age animated by a different form of thinking and a new approach to life — one that prizes "high concept" and "high touch" aptitudes. High concept involves the capacity to detect patterns and opportunities, to create artistic and emotional beauty, to craft a satisfying narrative, and to combine seemingly unrelated ideas into something new. High touch involves the ability to empathize with others, to understand the subtleties of human interaction, to find joy in one's self and to elicit it in others, and to stretch beyond the quotidian in pursuit of purpose and meaning.

Two Hemispheres

There's something that encapsulates the change — and it's right inside your head. Our brains are divided into two hemispheres. The left hemisphere is sequential, logical and analytical. The right hemisphere is nonlinear, intuitive and holistic.

We enlist both halves of our brains for even the simplest tasks. But the well-established differences between the two hemispheres of the brain yield a powerful metaphor for interpreting our present and guiding our future. Today, the defining skills of the previous era — the "left brain" capabilities that powered the Information Age — are necessary but no longer sufficient. And the capabilities we once disdained or thought frivolous — the "right brain" qualities of inventiveness, empathy, joyfulness and meaning — increasingly will determine who flourishes and who flounders. For individuals, families and organizations, professional success and personal fulfillment now require a whole new mind. ■

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Summarized by arrangement with Riverhead Books, a member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc. from *A Whole New Mind* by Daniel Pink. Copyright © Daniel H. Pink, 2005. 260 pages. $24.95 Hardcover. ISBN 1-57322-308-5.

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Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries (ISSN 0747-2196), P.O. Box 1053, Concordville, PA 19331 USA, a division of Concentrated Knowledge Corp. Published monthly. Subscriptions: $195 per year in the United States, Canada and Mexico, and $275 to all other countries. Periodicals postage paid at Concordville, Pa., and additional offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Soundview, P.O. Box 1053, Concordville, PA 19331. Copyright © 2006 by Soundview Executive Book Summaries.

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PART ONE: THE CONCEPTUAL AGE

Right Brain Rising

Outside a gargantuan government building, a light May rain is falling. Inside, the author is having his brain scanned.

To find out what direction our lives will take in these outsourced, automated, upside-down times, clues might be found in the way the brain is organized. So, the author has volunteered to be part of the control group — what researchers call "healthy volunteers" — for a project at the National Institute of Mental Health, outside Washington, D.C. The study involves capturing images of brains at rest and at work, which means he'll soon get to see the organ that's been leading him around the past four decades — and, in the process, perhaps gain a clearer view of how all of us will navigate the future.

The Belly of the Beast

The stretcher he is on juts from the middle of a GE Signa 3T, one of the world's most advanced magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machines. It's a huge piece of equipment, spanning nearly 8 feet on each side and weighing more than 35,000 pounds. At the center of the machine is a circular opening, about 2 feet in diameter. The technicians slide his stretcher through the opening and into the hollowed-out core that forms the belly of this beast. With his arms pinned by his sides and the ceiling about 2 inches above his nose, he feels like he's been crammed into a torpedo tube and forgotten.

After a half hour, they've got a picture of his brain. That initial brain scan was like sitting for a portrait, and the machine painted the picture. While science can learn a great deal from these brain portraits, a newer technique — called functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) — can capture pictures of the brain in action. Researchers ask subjects to do something inside the machine — hum a tune, listen to a joke, solve a puzzle — and then track the parts of the brain to which blood flows. This technique is revolutionizing science and medicine, yielding a deeper understanding of a range of human experience — from dyslexia in children to the mechanisms of Alzheimer's disease to how parents respond to babies' cries.

The Right (and Left) Stuff

Our brains are extraordinary. Yet for all the brain's complexity, its broad topography is simple and symmetrical. Scientists have long known that a neurological Mason-Dixon Line divides the brain into two regions. And until surprisingly recently, the scientific establishment considered the two regions separate but unequal. The left side, the theory went, was the crucial half, the half that made us human. The right side was subsidiary — the remnant, some argued, of an earlier stage of development. The left hemisphere was rational, analytic and logical. The right hemisphere was mute, nonlinear and instinctive — a vestige that nature had designed for a purpose that humans had outgrown.

This view prevailed for much of the next century — until a soft-spoken Caltech professor named Robert W. Sperry reshaped our understanding of our brains and ourselves. In the late 1950s, Sperry studied patients who had epileptic seizures that had required removal of the corpus callosum, the thick bundle of some 300 million nerve fibers that connects the brain's two hemispheres. In a set of experiments on these "split-brain" patients, Sperry discovered that the established view was flawed. Yes, our brains were divided into two halves. But as he put it, "The so-called subordinate or minor hemisphere, which we had formerly supposed to be illiterate and mentally retarded and thought by some authorities to not even be conscious, was found to be in fact the superior cerebral member when it came to performing certain kinds of mental tasks." In other words, the right wasn't inferior to the left. It was just different.

Thanks to Sperry's pioneering research and the advent of technologies like the fMRI that allow researchers to watch the brain in action, the right hemisphere today has achieved a measure of legitimacy. It's real. It's important. It helps make us human. No neuroscientist worth his or her Ph.D. ever disputes that. Yet beyond the neuroscience labs and brain-imaging clinics, two misconceptions about the right side of the brain persist.

The Wrong Stuff

These two misconceptions are opposite in spirit but similar in silliness. The first considers the right brain a savior; the second considers it a saboteur.

Adherents to the savior view have climbed aboard the scientific evidence on the right hemisphere and raced from legitimacy to reverence. They believe the right brain is the repository of all that is good and just and noble in the human condition.

Partly in response to the tide of inane things that have been said about the right brain, a second, contrary bias has also taken hold. This view grudgingly acknowledges the right hemisphere's legitimacy, but believes that emphasizing so-called right-brain thinking risks sabotaging the economic and social progress we've made by applying the force of logic to our lives.

Alas, the right hemisphere will neither save us nor sabotage us. The reality, as is so often the case with reality, is more nuanced.

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Right Brain Rising

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The Real Stuff

The two hemispheres of our brains don't operate as on-off switches — one powering down as soon as the other starts lighting up. Both halves play a role in nearly everything we do. With more than three decades of research on the brain's hemispheres, it's possible to distill the findings to four key differences:

1. **The left hemisphere controls the right side of the body; the right hemisphere controls the left side of the body.**
2. **The left hemisphere is sequential; the right hemisphere is simultaneous.**
3. **The left hemisphere specializes in text; the right hemisphere specializes in context.**
4. **The left hemisphere analyzes the details; the right hemisphere synthesizes the big picture.**

We need both L-Directed Thinking — sequential and literal — and R-Directed Thinking — metaphorical and contextual — in order to craft fulfilling lives and build protective, just societies. But the mere fact that this obvious point must be underscored is perhaps further indication of how much we've been in the thrall of reductionist, binary thinking.

But this is changing — and it will dramatically reshape our lives. Left-brain-style thinking used to be the driver and right-brain-style thinking the passenger. Now, R-Directed Thinking is suddenly grabbing the wheel, stepping on the gas, and determining where we're going and how we'll get there. L-Directed aptitudes — the sorts of things measured by the SAT and deployed by CPAs — are still necessary. But they're no longer sufficient. Instead, the R-Directed aptitudes so often disdained and dismissed — artistry, empathy, taking the long view, pursuing the transcendent — will increasingly determine who soars and who stumbles. It's a dizzying — but ultimately inspiring — change. ■

Abundance, Asia and Automation

Three forces are tilting the scales in favor of R-Directed Thinking. Abundance has satisfied, even oversatisfied, the material needs of millions — boosting the significance of beauty and emotion, and accelerating individuals' search for meaning. Abundance has produced an ironic result: The very triumph of L-Directed Thinking has lessened its significance. The prosperity it has unleashed has placed a premium on less rational, more R-Directed sensibilities — beauty, spirituality and emotion. For businesses, it's no longer enough to create a product that's reasonably priced and adequately functional. It must also be beautiful, unique and meaningful.

Asia is now performing large amounts of routine, white-collar, L-Directed work at significantly lower costs, thereby forcing knowledge workers in the advanced world to master abilities that can't be shipped overseas. One out of 10 jobs in the U.S. computer, software, and information technology industry will move overseas in the next two years and one in four IT jobs will be off-shored by 2010. According to Forrester Research, "at least 3.3 million white-collar jobs and $136 billion in wages will shift from the U.S. to low-cost countries like India, China and Russia" by 2015.

And automation has begun to affect this generation's white-collar workers in much the same way it did last generation's blue-collar workers, requiring L-Directed professionals to develop aptitudes that computers can't do better, faster or cheaper. Just as John Henry couldn't beat the steam drill, or Garry Kasparov, now our modern John Henry, can't beat Deep Blue, people can't compete with machines when it comes to logic or calculation. We have to develop aptitudes that can't be replicated by machines. ■

High Concept, High Touch

To survive in this age, individuals and organizations must examine what they're doing to earn a living and ask themselves three questions:

1. **Can someone overseas do it cheaper?**
2. **Can a computer do it faster?**
3. **Is what I'm offering in demand in an age of abundance?**

If your answer to question 1 or 2 is yes, or if your answer to question 3 is no, you're in deep trouble. Mere survival today depends on being able to do something that overseas knowledge workers can't do cheaper, that powerful computers can't do faster, and that satisfies one of the nonmaterial, transcendent desires of an abundant age.

That is why high tech is no longer enough. We'll need to supplement our well-developed high-tech abilities with abilities that are high concept and high touch.

How can we prepare ourselves for the Conceptual Age? In a world tossed by abundance, Asia and automation, in which L-Directed Thinking remains necessary but no longer sufficient, we must become proficient in R-Directed Thinking and master aptitudes that are high concept and high touch. We must perform work that overseas knowledge workers can't do cheaper; that computers can't do faster; and that satisfies the aesthetic, emotional and spiritual demands of a prosperous time. But on another level, that answer is inadequate. What exactly are we supposed to do?

The answer can be distilled to six specific high-concept and high-touch aptitudes that have become essential in this new era. These aptitudes are "the six senses": Design, Story, Symphony, Empathy, Play and Meaning. ■

PART TWO: THE SIX SENSES

Introducing the Six Senses

In the Conceptual Age, we will need to complement our L-Directed reasoning by mastering six essential R-Directed aptitudes. Together these six high-concept, high-touch senses can help develop the whole new mind this era demands:

1. Not just function but also DESIGN. Today it's economically crucial and personally rewarding to create something that is beautiful, whimsical, or emotionally engaging.

2. Not just argument but also STORY. The essence of persuasion, communication and self-understanding has become the ability also to fashion a compelling narrative.

3. Not just focus but also SYMPHONY. What's in greatest demand today isn't analysis but synthesis — seeing the big picture and, crossing boundaries, being able to combine disparate pieces into an arresting new whole.

4. Not just logic but also EMPATHY. What will distinguish those who thrive will be their ability to understand what makes their fellow woman and man tick, to forge relationships, and to care for others.

5. Not just seriousness but also PLAY. Too much sobriety can be bad for your career and worse for your general well-being. In the Conceptual Age, we all need to play.

6. Not just accumulation but also MEANING. A world of material plenty has freed us to pursue more significant desires: purpose, transcendence, and spiritual fulfillment.

Design

The late Gordon MacKenzie, a longtime creative force at Hallmark Cards, once told a story that quickly entered the folklore among designers. MacKenzie was a public-spirited fellow who often visited schools to talk about his profession. He'd open each talk by telling students he was an artist. Then he'd look around the classroom, notice the artwork on the walls, and wonder aloud who created the masterpieces.

"How many artists are there in the room?" MacKenzie would ask. "Would you please raise your hands?"

The responses have always followed the same pattern. In kindergarten and first-grade classes, every kid thrust a hand in the air. In second-grade classes, about three-fourths of the kids raised their hands, though less eagerly. In third grade, only a few children held up their hands. And by sixth grade, not a single hand went up. The kids just looked around to see if anybody in the class would admit to what they'd now learned was deviant behavior.

Designers and other creative types repeated MacKenzie's tale — often over drinks, usually in a wistful tone — to show how little the wider world valued their work. And when MacKenzie related the story himself to large audiences, people would slowly shake their heads. What a shame, they would mutter. Too bad, they would cluck. But their reaction was, at most, a lament.

In fact, they should have been outraged. They should have raced to their local school and demanded an explanation. They should have consoled their children, confronted the principal, and ousted the school board. Because MacKenzie's story is not some teary saga about underfunded art programs. It is a cautionary tale for our times.

The wealth of nations and the well-being of individuals now depend on having artists in the room. In a world enriched by abundance but disrupted by the automation and outsourcing of white-collar work, everyone, regardless of profession, must cultivate an artistic sensibility. We may not all be Dali or Degas. But today we must all be designers.

It's easy to dismiss design — to relegate it to mere ornament, the prettifying of places and objects to disguise their banality. But that is a serious misunderstanding of what design is and why it matters — especially now. John Heskett, an expert on the subject, explains, "[D]esign, stripped to its essence, can be defined as the human nature to shape and make our environment in ways without precedent in nature, to serve our needs and give meaning to our lives."

Utility and Significance

Design is a classic whole-minded approach. It is, to borrow Heskett's terms, a combination of *utility* and *significance*. A graphic designer must whip up a brochure that is easy to read. That's utility. But at its most effective, his or her brochure must also transmit ideas or emotions that the words themselves cannot convey. That's significance. Utility is akin to L-Directed Thinking; significance is akin to R-Directed Thinking. And, as with those two thinking styles, today utility has become widespread, inexpensive and relatively easy to achieve — which has increased the value of significance.

Design — utility enhanced by significance — has become an essential aptitude for personal fulfillment and professional success for at least three reasons. First, thanks to rising prosperity and advancing technology, good design is now more accessible than ever, which allows more people to partake in its pleasures and become connoisseurs of what was once specialized knowledge. Second, in an age of material abundance, design has become crucial for most businesses — as a means of differentiation and as a way to create new markets. Third, as more people develop a design sensibility, we'll increasingly be able to deploy design for its ultimate purpose: changing the world.

Design is a high-concept aptitude that is difficult to outsource or automate — and that increasingly confers a competitive advantage in business. Good design, now

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Design

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more accessible and affordable than ever, also offers us a chance to bring pleasure, meaning and beauty to our lives. But most important, cultivating a design sensibility can make our small planet a better place for us all. ■

Story

Time for a pop quiz.

Earlier, in the discussion of the three forces nudging us into the Conceptual Age, some supporting evidence was presented. How much do you remember?

Question 1: In the section on Asia, abundance and automation, we learned that large amounts of white-collar work are going to places like India, China and the Philippines. According to the research cited, how many dollars in American wages are expected to shift to these low-cost locales over the next 10 years?

Question 2: In that same section, we learned that powerful software was reconfiguring, and often eliminating, the jobs of many knowledge workers in the West. Who is the John Henry of the Conceptual Age?

Unless you have a photographic memory or a peculiar fascination with lost wages, you probably missed Question 1 and nailed Question 2. Why? In Question 1, you had to recall a fact. In Question 2, you had to remember a story.

Our difficulty retrieving that isolated factoid, and our relative ease summoning the sad saga of Garry Kasparov, aren't signs of flaccid intelligence or impending Alzheimer's. They merely demonstrate how most minds work. Stories are easier to remember — because in many ways, stories are how we remember. "Narrative imagining — story — is the fundamental instrument of thought," writes cognitive scientist Mark Turner in his book *The Literary Mind*. "Rational capacities depend on it. It is our chief means of looking into the future, of predicting, of planning, and of explaining. … Most of our experience, our knowledge and our thinking is organized as stories."

But as important as story has been throughout humanity, and as central as it remains to how we think, in the Information Age it got something of a bad rap. Hollywood, Bollywood and other entertainment centers revere story. But the rest of society, to the extent anyone even thinks about it, considers it fact's less dependable younger sibling. Stories amuse; facts illuminate. Stories divert; facts reveal. But this view runs counter to how our minds actually work. In the Conceptual Age, minimizing the importance of story places you in professional and personal peril.

The truth is that facts have become widely available and, as a consequence, each one becomes less valuable. What begins to matter more is the ability to place these facts in *context* and to deliver them with *emotional impact*.

And that is the essence of the aptitude of Story — context enriched by emotion. Story exists where high concept and high touch intersect. Story is high concept because it sharpens our understanding of one thing by showing it in the context of something else. To paraphrase E.M. Forster's famous observation, a fact is "The queen died and the king died." A story is "The queen died and the king died of a broken heart."

The ability to encapsulate, contextualize and emotionalize has become vastly more important in the Conceptual Age. When so much routine knowledge work can be reduced to rules and farmed out to fast computers and smart L-Directed thinkers abroad, the more elusive abilities embodied by Story become more valuable. Likewise, as more people lead lives of abundance, we'll have a greater opportunity to pursue lives of meaning. And stories — the ones we tell ourselves, the ones we tell to ourselves — are often the vehicles we use in that pursuit. ■

Symphony

The aptitude of "Symphony" is the ability to put together the pieces. It is the capacity to synthesize rather than to analyze; to see relationships between seemingly unrelated fields; to detect broad patterns rather than to deliver specific answers; and to invent something new by combining elements nobody else thought to pair. Symphony is also an attribute of the brain's right hemisphere in the literal, as well as the metaphorical, sense.

Symphonic thinking is a signature ability of composers and conductors, whose jobs involve corralling a diverse group of notes, instruments and performers, and producing a unified and pleasing sound. Entrepreneurs and inventors have long relied on this ability. But today Symphony is

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Dyslexic Self-Made Millionaires

One remarkable recent study found that self-made millionaires are four times more likely than the rest of the population to be dyslexic. Why? Dyslexics struggle with L-Directed Thinking and the linear, sequential, alphabetic reasoning at its core. But as with a blind person who develops a more acute sense of hearing, a dyslexic's difficulties in one area lean him or her to acquire outsized ability in others. As Sally Shaywitz, a Yale neuroscientist and specialist in dyslexia, writes, "Dyslexics think differently. They are intuitive and excel at problem-solving, seeing the big picture, and simplifying. ... They are poor rote reciters, but inspired visionaries." Game-changers such as Charles Schwab, who invented the discount brokerage, and Richard Branson, who has shaken up the retail music and airline industries, both cite their dyslexia as a secret to their success.

Symphony

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becoming an essential aptitude for a much wider swath of the population. The reasons go back to the three forces propelling us out of the Information Age. Automation has taken over many of the routine analytic tasks that knowledge workers once performed. Many of those tasks are also heading to Asia, where they can be done equally well for much less. That is freeing (and in some cases forcing) professionals to do what computers and low-wage foreign technicians have a more difficult time replicating; recognizing patterns, crossing boundaries to uncover hidden connections, and making bold leaps of imagination.

Meantime, a world teeming with information, individual choices, and just plain stuff is putting a premium on this aptitude in our personal lives as well. Modern life's glut of options and stimuli can be so overwhelming that those with the ability to see the big picture — to sort out what really matters — have a decided advantage in their pursuit of personal well-being. ■

Empathy

The author writes, "Yesterday was rough. I worked nonstop from the time I awoke, straining to meet a couple of deadlines, trying to squirm out of an unexpected new assignment, and contending with a 7-year-old with a runny nose, a 5-year-old with a loose tooth, and an 18-month-old who was teaching himself cause-and-effect by pushing ceramics off a counter. In the afternoon I ran five miles. After a rushed dinner, I returned to my office and worked a few more hours, until I was too tired to concentrate. At about 10 p.m. — bone tired — I went to bed. Except I couldn't sleep. I read a little, then tried again. No go. So around 1 a.m., I went downstairs, poured myself a glass of wine, and read the previous day's newspaper. Then another glass of wine. Finally, I did fall asleep, sometime after 3:06, the last numbers I remember seeing on the clock radio beside my bed.

"About three hours later, the 18-month-old stood up in his crib and began bellowing his traditional morning milk chant. By 7 a.m., the house had erupted into full morning mania. And by 8 a.m., I was back in my office, facing another day of deadlines. I'm tired, really tired. In fact, I just yawned. And as I think about the day before me, I'm yawning again."

Stop for a moment. In the past minute, have you yawned? When you read the author's account of sleepiness, and then pictured him yawning, did you feel an inkling of a yawn creep toward your jaw? If so, you probably have a natural inclination for the next essential aptitude — Empathy.

Empathy is the ability to imagine yourself in someone else's position and to intuit what that person is feeling. It is the ability to stand in others' shoes, to see with their eyes, and to feel with their hearts. It is something we do spontaneously, an act of instinct rather than the product of deliberation. But Empathy isn't sympathy — that is, feeling bad *for* someone else. It is feeling *with* someone else, sensing what it would be like to be that person. Empathy is a stunning act of imaginative derring-do, the ultimate virtual reality — climbing into another's mind to experience the world from that person's perspective.

But Empathy — like many of the other high-concept, high-touch, aptitudes — wasn't always given its proper due in the Information Age. It was often considered a softhearted nicety in a world that demanded hardheaded detachment. The era of sharp-minded knowledge workers and briskly efficient high-tech companies prized emotional distance and cool reason — the ability to step back, assess the situation, and to make a decision unimpeded by emotion. But as with so many attributes of L-Directed Thinking, we are beginning to see the limits of such a single-minded approach. Daniel Goleman's book *Emotional Intelligence* signaled the beginning of this shift. Goleman argued that emotional abilities are even more important than conventional intellectual abilities — and the world took to his message.

But 10 years later, the Conceptual Age is increasing the stakes. When Goleman wrote his book, the Internet was in its infancy and those highly skilled Indian programmers were in elementary school. Today, cheap and widespread online access, combined with all those overseas knowledge workers, are making the attributes measurable by IQ much easier to replace — which, as we have seen, has meant that aptitudes more difficult to replicate are becoming more valuable. And the one aptitude that's proven impossible for computers to reproduce, and very difficult for faraway workers connected by electrons to match, is Empathy. ■

For additional information on sharpening your empathic powers, go to: http://my.summary.com

Play

Why is Dr. Madan Kataria laughing?

The explanation is more complicated than you might expect. Kataria, a physician in Mumbai, India, likes to laugh. A lot. In fact, he believes that laughter can function like a benevolent virus — that it can infect individuals, communities, even nations. His popularity around the world, and especially the gradual acceptance of his laughter clubs in offices and boardrooms, reveal another important dimension of the Conceptual Age — a move away from sober seriousness as a measure of ability and the elevation of the next essential high-concept, high-touch aptitude: Play. Kataria says, "When you are play-

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Play

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ful, you are activating the right side of your brain. The logical brain is a limited brain. The right side is unlimited. You can be anything you want."

Contrast Kataria's movement, and the workplace laughter clubs it has spawned, with the Ford Motor Co. of the 1930s and 1940s. At Ford's River Rouge plant, laughter was a disciplinary offense — while humming, whistling and smiling were evidence of insubordination. Work and play, Ford feared, was a toxic combination. If they weren't quarantined, each would poison the other.

But in the Conceptual Age, as abundance releases organizations from the post-Depression grimness that gripped the River Rouge plant, commingling work and play has become both more common and more necessary. At times, it is even an explicit corporate strategy. Take the airline business. Southwest Airlines is one of today's most successful carriers, earning a regular profit while many of its competitors wobble on the edge of insolvency. The company's mission statement offers clues to its stellar performance. It says, "People rarely succeed at anything unless they are having fun doing it" — a 180-degree turn from Ford's mandated joylessness.

And it's not just one zany American corporation that is supplementing the work ethic with a play ethic. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, more than 50 European companies — including less-than-zany firms such as Nokia, Daimler-Chrysler and Alcatel — have brought in consultants in "Serious Play," a technique that uses Lego building blocks to train corporate executives. In the Conceptual Age, fun and games are not just fun and games — and laughter is no laughing matter. ■

Meaning

In the early winter of 1942, Austrian authorities in Vienna rounded up and arrested hundreds of Jews, among them a young psychiatrist named Viktor Frankl. At the time, Frankl was a rising figure in his field who was developing a new theory of psychological well-being. He and his wife, Tilly, anticipated the roundup, so they took pains to preserve their most important possessions, including the manuscript of a book he was writing about his theories. Although Tilly sewed the manuscript into the lining of his coat, it was lost. Over the next three years, at Auschwitz and later at Dachau, as his wife, brother, mother and father perished in the gas chambers, Frankl worked to recreate his text by scratching notes on stolen scraps of paper. And in 1946, one year after Allied forces liberated the concentration camps, those crumpled bits of paper formed the basis of what would become one of the most powerful and enduring works of the last century — Frankl's book, *Man's Search for Meaning*.

In his book, Frankl describes how he persevered in the face of crushing labor, sadistic guards, and scant food. Frankl elaborated the theory he had begun before his arrest. He argues that "man's main concern is not to gain pleasure or to avoid pain but rather to see a meaning in his life."

Frankl and others managed to find meaning and purpose even in the unimaginably ghastly setting of a concentration camp. The search for meaning is a drive that exists in all of us — and a combination of external circumstances and internal will can bring it to the surface.

This last point is the key to the book — and to its relevance today. In the early years of the 21st century, several forces have gathered to create the circumstances for the pursuit of meaning on a scale never before imagined. Robert William Fogel, a Nobel laureate economist, calls this moment the "Fourth Great Awakening." Whatever we call it the consequences are the same. Meaning has become a central aspect of our work and our lives. Pursuing meaning obviously is no simple task. You can't buy a cookbook with a recipe for it. But there are two practical, whole-minded ways for individuals, families and businesses to begin the search for meaning: Start taking spirituality seriously and start taking happiness seriously. ■

SOUNDVIEW RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *A Whole New Mind*, you'll also like:

1. ***The Leader of the Future*** **by The Drucker Foundation.** The authors present essays by leading management thinkers, including Drucker, Covey and Handy, on what skills leaders need to succeed.
2. ***Ideas Are Free*** **by Alan G. Robinson and Dean M. Schroeder.** The authors show managers how to access the many ideas of their employees and turn them into competitive advantage.
3. ***The Age of Unreason*** **by Charles Handy.** This guide to the unfolding world introduces readers to such offbeat organizational structures as shamrocks and inverted doughnuts.
4. ***Competing for the Future*** **by Gary Hamel and C.K. Prahalad.** Create a successful future by transforming your company with stretch goals, new competencies, and by defining the future to ensure you'll get in on opportunities.
5. ***Getting a Grip on Tomorrow*** **by Mike Johnson.** Johnson shows how to maximize your value to the firm.

For additional information on longevity, go to: http://my.summary.com

Afterword

The Conceptual Age is dawning. Those who hope to survive in it must master the high-concept, high-touch abilities. This situation presents both promise and peril. The promise is that Conceptual Age jobs are exceedingly democratic. The peril is that our world moves at a furious pace. The first group of people who develop a whole new mind, who master high-concept and high-touch abilities, will do extremely well. The rest — those who move slowly or not at all — may miss out or, worse, suffer.

The choice is yours. ■

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Anomaly

Zack Miller

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Executive Book Summaries®

Anomaly

How to Finally Stand Out from the Crowd



by **Zack Miller**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

An anomaly is defined as something that deviates from what's standard, normal, or expected. When you are new to the business world, as author Zack Miller once was, you have to be different. He did not go to business school or get an MBA. He credits his effort, hustle, and willingness to learn as the keys to his success. The methods and techniques you'll learn to grow your brand have been tested over and over, are either free or super cheap to implement, and will show you ways over, around, or through your obstacles.

Anomaly teaches you how to stand out from the millions of people fighting to make a name for themselves, offers both online and in-person strategies, helps you open your mind to the concept of confidence when building an audience, and showcases proven case studies. With Miller's methods, you will learn how to use being an anomaly to turn yourself into a well-respected, successful business person.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to find your niche and identify your target customer.
- To take a prospect from the first view to conversion by following the sales funnel.
- How to become an anomaly through content inventory and self-promotion.
- How to take control of your content, marketing, and communication to stand out.

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Sarah T. Dayton, Editor-in-Chief • Meghan Kozak, Director of Content • Kylie O'Connor, Graphic Designer

The Fundamentals

Whether you're a business owner, a college graduate looking for a job, or are just unhappy in your current position, ***Anomaly*** provides the business principles to get the results you desire.

Terminology of Business Principles

To begin, it's important to understand the terminology used in business:

- **Conversions** are the successful events where your target customer completes the action you're trying to get them to do. Examples of conversions range from buying a product from your store, signing a contract, or subscribing to your email list.
- **A target customer** is the person or group of people you have identified to have a series of similar trends and are interested in products or services you provide.
- **Value** is providing something useful to someone. This value can build relationships and people love to support people they like, trust, and have a relationship with.
- **Marketing** is doing anything to get someone's attention or get them to look at you or your business. Studies show that it takes about six such occurrences to be noticed. When it comes to marketing, money isn't the vehicle that engages a person's eyeballs-it's setting yourself apart from the pack.
- **A brand** is how someone perceives you, what people think you do, and how they feel when they see your company, read your stories, or watch your videos. A brand is about the reaction someone has when they consume what you distribute.
- To know what your brand could be, you first need to understand what you're best at, what you love to do, and dream about. This "calling" is your **niche**.

Finding Your Niche

You may already have an idea of what you're best at. Start by thinking about where you spend your time or what you do online. Document everything you do for the next week: the food you eat, the conversations you have, what articles you read, what you watch on Netflix, and what you search for online.

Create a spreadsheet to track how much time you spend on each and how you feel engaging in each activity. Place a number 1 to 4 next to the activity ranking how you feel.

After seven days, break the document into categories of sleeping, eating, content consumption, content creation, family, friends, working, and exercising. Look at the rankings under each of those.

This gets you closer to seeing when you're happy and when you're not. When trying to figure out what you love, it's likely right in front of you, but you may not see it or know how to make a living from it, yet.

Who is Your Target Customer?

Every business has a target customer and it's important to know who that customer is and what that customer looks like. Details about your target customer influence almost every decision made in your business: logo design, marketing channels, email copy, photography choices, etc.

The process of learning as much about a person or business as you can is the definition of target customer research. Your target customer is someone who meets a series of criteria that you determine from dissecting your current customer base or network.

Standard demographics such as age, gender, height, weight, and race can be used, but it's harder to use only those. Look for a deeper understanding with things like where they vacation, what they eat, where they went to school, brands they wear, where they live, what they like and follow on social media, what language they speak, and how adventurous they are.

Knowing your target customer is a multistep process. You need to know: Who are they? What do they look like? Where can I find them? and What appeals to them? By doing this, you're getting direct knowledge as to what their pain points and problems are so you can provide solutions.

The Sales Funnel

A sales funnel is the process of taking a visitor or prospect through your system from the first view to conversion. By following the sales funnel, you can save yourself a lot of time and energy as well as get the conversion you're striving for.

Step 1: Bringing Awareness

You or your business need to be seen by your potential customers. Some of the ways to do this are an introduction by a mutual acquaintance, writing and sharing a blog post, creating and posting a video online, doing an interview, or making comments on social media posts.

Step 2: Getting Contact Information

The next step is to connect with those who are now aware of you or your business. Use your most popular content to excite someone about learning from you and give it to them in exchange for their contact information.

Step 3: The Follow-Up

During follow-up, provide additional value and supplemental information. How do you make sure your follow-up is strong? While connecting with your prospect, take a note about the topics you discussed so you can mention it later. It's important to follow up with a new contact within 24 hours in order to get the relationship moving forward.

Step 4: Dig Deep

After follow-up, it's time to dig deep. This is important because getting accurate information to analyze is critical, as you need to understand the problem your prospect has that you're trying to solve and whether or not you are the best fit to solve the problem. If you aren't, refer them to someone who could be a great fit, which increases your chance of them referring people to you in the future.

Step 5: Hard Sell

The hard sell varies from business to business and depends upon the metric you're tracking. If your metric is subscribers, then the hard sell for you will be asking them to subscribe to your channel. If you are raising money for a project, your hard sell will be asking people for funding. This is a good time to remind them of the results you have already produced for them.

Step 6: 24-Hour Follow Up

No matter if you succeeded in the hard sell or not, it's imperative to follow up within 24 hours. Always have a personalized piece to messages, even if they are automated, and ask for users or customers to reply if they have any questions.

Step 7: Ongoing Support

Once you have turned a visitor or prospect into a customer, you want to keep them around, engaged, and happy for as long as possible. Do this through ongoing support and personalized messages.

Becoming the Anomaly

To become an anomaly, you have to think and act differently from everyone around you.

Inventory

Content is information like blog posts, videos, infographics, podcasts, how-to guides, and walkthroughs. It's time to take an inventory of the content you already have. This begins by finding all of the content you have ever produced and then putting it into a spreadsheet. Use descriptors like title or headlines, keywords, tags, categories, target customer produced for, and date of release to organize your pieces. Once you have an idea of where you are, you'll be able to see where you need to go. What holes can you fill? What other kinds of content can you get into?

> If you hide your best work, it could be one of the reasons you're being held back. . .

Self-Promotion

Your best content should be given away and heavily promoted. If you hide your best work, it could be one of the reasons you're being held back from reaching your goals. Create a list of moments where you have had wins, no matter how old they are. Position your credibility and leverage associations: to brands you've worked with, schools you've attended, accomplishments you've had. Learn to get comfortable praising your accolades.

Apply for Awards

Find listing of awards and their nomination periods on a local and national level. If you qualify, apply! If you win, it's time to market that through social media and a blog post, tagging as many parties as possible. Add the logo of the award you won on your website and marketing materials.

Handwritten Cards

The normal practice to begin a relationship is to exchange email addresses and phone numbers. To be an anomaly, obtain the mailing address and send handwritten cards instead. By not doing what everyone else does, you'll stand out and not be lost in the crowd.

Anomalies in the Wild

To be an anomaly, you must take control of your content, marketing, and communication.

Maximizing Your Social Profiles

Throw some flair and personality into your profile pic and make it more fun. Descriptions should include keywords along with something unique about you that you want the world to know. Position yourself as the credible expert to turn heads and create a following.

Get Press

Start a spreadsheet with information on reporters that could possibly do a story on you. Reach out and introduce yourself by email or social media. Like and comment on their recent articles to open a dialogue. Stroke their egos and they'll like you more! Provide value to the reporter through becoming a source with the goal of having reporters call you when they need an authority in your industry.

Asking for Testimonials

Reach out to clients and ask if you can do a case study, interview, or showcase on them. Diversify by picking clients of different industries, demographics, and size. Make it win-win by including a picture of the person or logo, a copy of their testimonial, and a link back to their site.

Promoting Social Reviews

Social reviews can go a long way in telling potential customers whether or not they should give your business a shot. No matter what kind of review you receive, learn from the response and get in touch with the person who provided the review. Engagement is key.

Landing Podcast Interviews

Podcast interviews are a great and easy way to get your name out for free. And, unlike the traditional media, it's a lot easier to get on a podcast. Find a podcast you want to be interviewed for and fill out their "Do you want to be on the show?" form.

Leverage Blog Posts

Blog content is crucial for three reasons: It indexes well on search engines, it's easy for people to consume, and it gives you a melting pot of content on your website. To get your blog posts seen, send them to friends, family, and followers and encourage them to share it.

Using Webinars and Courses

Webinars are about education and reputation building. A webinar allows you to educate your prospects on a process that they're trying to learn more about. In their eyes, you become the authority, and then at the end of the webinar, you upsell your product or service.

Everyone in the world was born to be something. Being an anomaly is about doing something different than others. You don't have to be the best, but you can do it differently.



Zack Miller started his first business at the age of 10. Since then he's spent decades helping other people successfully start businesses both locally in Norfolk, VA and nationally via online platform 1000 Four. Zack has used the skills detailed in his book Anomaly to land an interview with Daymond John, be chosen as the host of a business TV show on ABC, get invited to the White House, be featured in Entrepreneur Magazine, and raise money from the team that started the Weather Channel.

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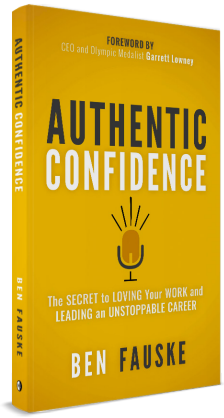
Authentic Confidence

Ben Fauske

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Authentic Confidence

The Secret to Loving Your Work and Leading an Unstoppable Career



by **Ben Fauske**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The world of work is replete with people who are feeling anxious and stressed. Who feel like imposters. Who are struggling to get along with their bosses or co-workers. Who believe they lack the education or experience they need for success. Who want to increase their influence. Who feel like they are falling behind.

Authentic Confidence: The Secret to Loving Your Work and Leading an Unstoppable Career shows that a major cause of these and other problems that hold people back in their careers is overconfidence or under-confidence. The book is for people who want to find appropriate confidence for themselves or coach it in others.

Author Ben Fauske, who has studied rock musicians extensively, draws from examples in that world and presents a process for achieving the middle ground, which he terms *Authentic Confidence*. The process works for new leaders, sales professionals, plant employees—anyone in a position that requires strong leadership. Thousands of people who have been taught this process have been transformed in their careers.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why confidence issues are key to career success.
- What Authentic Confidence looks like and how to attain it.
- A self-assessment process for identifying confidence issues.
- The career pattern of world-class influencers.

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Sarah T. Dayton, Editor-in-Chief • Meghan Kozak, Director of Content • Kylie Waytuck, Graphic Designer

Why Some Love and Others Hate Work

In any organization, customer confidence is the most important currency. If customers lose confidence, organizations go out of business because customers have options.

Overconfident behaviors appear insensitive, arrogant, and bossy. Their behaviors are toxic.

People who are under-confident demonstrate behaviors that are often fear-based and indecisive. Customers will do whatever they can to avoid this option. Underconfident people often worry about the opinion of others and feel they are not good enough. These behaviors are disruptive.

Authentic Confidence is the fast track to success. Leaders with Authentic Confidence exhibit two critical traits: pride and humility. In the right balance, these traits are a powerful combination. Customers are attracted to the person with Authentic Confidence, who delivers exceptional service and creates great relationships.

Disengagement

According to Gallup research, more than 70% of the American workforce is disengaged. This is an epidemic with disastrous consequences. Organizations filled with engaged employees—who are passionate about their work and committed to the organization—are filled with loyal and confident customers.

Negative behaviors in teams are often related to confidence issues. Ego, hidden agendas, and selfish behaviors always generate the strongest reactions. Overconfident behaviors by coworkers are often listed as the root cause of terrible teams, which make people hate work.

A common problem is that many people spend every day in an environment filled with gossip when certain people who have an "I am better than you" attitude are only looking out for themselves. Nobody likes a showoff, yet it is a common behavior in business, sports, and politics.

Confidence issues are left unchecked for many reasons. The person with the issues might be a great performer. Leaders are afraid to address the issue because their star player may leave. Or members of the team may attempt to deal with the issues, but they are quickly shut down by the person with the confidence issues. They eventually give up.

When one person demonstrates overconfidence, others will have to demonstrate under-confident behaviors to survive. Instead of a balance of opinions, there is one dominant and many submissive team members. The team talks about the behaviors behind the back of the dominant person. This breaks down trust and creates dysfunctional teams. Where gossip thrives, so does disengagement.

Culture Is the Problem

An organization's culture—its unwritten rules—is the most powerful force in shaping individual behavior. A culture that is ego-driven will lead to turf wars and backstabbing. People will pull against someone who is overconfident.

In most organizations, decisions have to be made to make it safe to speak truth without consequences. There is a place for strong leadership, but if people cannot share their views with leadership, then group think and self-justification will be the norm.

A culture that stifles success will lead to under-confident employees and, in turn, underwhelmed customers. There are unintended consequences of a humble culture taken too far. When you cannot be excited about your own success for fear of retaliation, there is a problem.

The key is creating a culture where success is applauded and egos are checked where necessary. Your effort is celebrated and jealousy is low. Everyone is working hard for a common goal and individual contributions are recognized. The mission of the organization is the highest priority, but it is clearly understood that a team is made up of many individual contributors.

So how do you develop a healthy culture? In short, healthy cultures guide under-confident people to find courage and overconfident people to find humility. Building leaders who build culture is the strategy proven to work.

Authentic Confidence Explained.

First, we receive input or feedback. We respond with either over-, under-, or Authentic Confidence. There are certain personalities or topics that will trigger us to respond with over- or under-confidence. It might be education, experience, age, gender, background, or the tone of someone's voice.

Once we understand our triggers, it is essential to create a game plan to resolve them. If we don't, we'll cycle between over- and under-confidence, either blaming others or ourselves for things not working out. Authentic Confidence is the process of getting to the root of confidence issues, resolving them, and responding with the appropriate amount of confidence in every situation.

When we start communicating with Authentic Confidence, customers will respond. They want nothing more than to partner with someone they can trust who provides an exceptional experience without drama.

Core Beliefs of an Unstoppable Career

Authentic Confidence is defined by two core beliefs: pride in work and humility in relationships.

Healthy pride is finding significant satisfaction from your career. You must care about the quality of the work you do before anyone else will.

Healthy humility is taking equal ownership of your greatness and growth areas. You should belief you are great but not a better person that others. You may be better at specific skills, but that does not make you a better human being. Humility in relationships allows you to work with people for a long time. You allow others to take the main stage when it is their turn. You listen without the intent to respond. You pull for others to do well. You assume the best in others until they prove otherwise. You are not intimated or jealous of others' success. You are driven by individual and team accomplishments.

Growing Your Influence

A person with Authentic Confidence takes great pride in their work and has humility in relationships. They are gifted influencers for both relationships and results. They have the most productive teams, creating the greatest customer experience. They are refreshing to be around and quick to share the glory with the team. They are honest optimists in action.

Increase Your Self-Awareness

Great leaders communicate the appropriate amount of confidence in every situation. Finding the balance between overconfidence and under-confidence starts with understanding our confidence tendencies. Studies have shown that we have a genetic predisposition to certain levels of self-esteem. This means that Authentic Confidence is challenging—it is not a natural state. We have to learn how to overcome our bias.

One of the ways to consider your bias is to examine how you react to compliments and criticisms. People with Authentic Confidence can accept both and respond appropriately. Your ability to appropriately respond to feedback is largely based on your self-awareness. Self-awareness is having an accurate view of yourself and being equally comfortable with your greatness and your weakness. Self-awareness is essential to effective leadership. The first step in increasing it is honestly evaluating the quality of your work and relationships.

Authentic Confidence Quotient

The Authentic Confidence Quotient (ACQ) is a confidential self-assessment. You must identify your own issues, not be told what they are. The ACQ includes four sections:

- List your current roles and responsibilities.
- Define the current level of confidence in each role (under-, over-, or Authentic Confidence).
- What are the limiting beliefs you have in each role (the thoughts you have about your career that hold you back)?
- Write a future goal that will build Authentic Confidence. What does success look like in every area of over- or under-confidence? You must find a replacement belief for each limiting belief. Visualize a goal as clearly as you can; this will create an image that will inspire action.

Finally, list your greatest strength. You must be able to communicate your competence in clear terms so others will have confidence in you. Choose one area of under-confidence to resolve—an area that is significant in your role and one in which you can make meaningful progress in the next three to six months.

Then create your Statement of Authentic Confidence. Combine your greatest strength and area of under-confidence in one statement. The purpose of this statement is to first believe your greatness internally. Once you believe it internally, you will find ways to demonstrate it externally.

Discover the Pattern of World-Class Influencers

The 5 Stages of Career Confidence

Stage 1: Significance (Moment of Impact)

Career significance refers to making the decision to have a meaningful impact with your work. Significance is found through continued growth. By gaining new leadership skills and resolving your confidence issues, your influence will increase, and so will the opportunities that cross your path.

Think in detail about the confidence issue on which you are working. Imagine different scenarios, including potential obstacles, and you will be drawn to solutions that make that

image a reality. The biggest mistake most people make in their careers is not knowing where they are going. They do not have a clear definition of what success looks like.

Stage 2: Competence (Model the Master)

To grow your competence—the ability to do something successfully or efficiently—it is critical to find someone who has been where you would like to go. New leaders will succeed faster by learning from experienced leaders, helping them avoid a lifetime of trial and error.

Learning from mentor is as simple as setting up an informal meeting to learn the best practices of your desired skill. Most will be flattered you want to learn from them. Reach out and ask for one hour of their time. You are just asking them to help you learn one specific skill and help you overcome your area of under-confidence. Come prepared for the meeting with questions on how they deliver excellence in this area. Take good notes and thank them for their time.

Stage 3: Authenticity (Signature Creation)

We were designed for unique contribution and anything less is to sacrifice our potential. Authenticity is the discovery and display of our individual value to others. Authenticity is the spark for invention, innovation, and creativity. To create your own signature style, reflect on your roots and remember what makes you most proud. Start to think about how you can deliver your core competence in new ways.

When you are developing your own leadership brand, you will find a new energy you never thought possible. You are creating something new, fresh, and unique to you. Some of your ideas will fail miserably, but more often than not you will see your effectiveness increase because you are being authentic and genuine. This is where the real love of work begins.

Stage 4: Leverage (Communicate Confidence)

After you master your new skill in the authenticity stage, you must learn how to share with others that you are not only competent in an area, but also that you are willing to use your skill to help others. People will see you as an expert on a subject and doors will open in areas you never thought possible.

Stage 5: Empathy (Better Together)

Empathy is never forgetting where you came from. It is the belief that even though you may better at a skill, it does not make you a better person. Empathy is the mindset that leads to a desire to give back. The goal is for the student to eventually become the teacher and pass on the same confidence-building process to others.

Conclusion

No matter where you are in your confidence journey, enhancing your relationships is the greatest impact you can have on the culture of your organization. When you are driving out of the parking lot of your organization for the last time, what will be your legacy?



Ben Fauske is the creator of the Authentic Confidence process and has taught thousands of leaders how to communicate with confidence. His clients describe him as passionate and committed to their success. Prior to creating the Authentic Confidence Process, Ben was the Director of Organizational Development for a Canadian based multi-national corporation. He is a certified Professional Behavioral Analyst and is sought after for executive coaching, live workshops, and keynotes.

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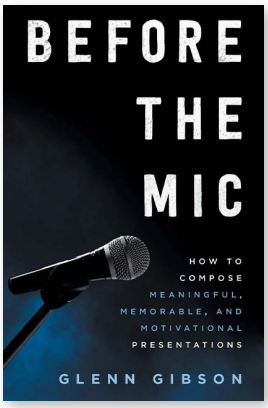
Before the Mic

Glenn Gibson

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Before the Mic

How to Compose Meaningful, Memorable, and Motivational Presentations



by **Glenn Gibson**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Over the years, Glenn Gibson has built a career of writing presentations, composing thousands of them and seeing them delivered to audiences numbering into the thousands.

He's honed a repeatable methodology used to write all of his presentations, along with a range of tools, tricks, and templates to help create the words and visuals quickly while working on multiple projects and presentations simultaneously. He's trained hundreds of executives and sales professionals using this methodology, and it has been used to write keynotes, sales pitches, board presentations, and even eulogies, commencements, and wedding speeches.

Now, this methodology is available in ***Before the Mic***, an in-depth guide that provides methods for creating meaningful, memorable, and motivational presentations that follow a proven structure designed for maximum impact.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The aMMMazing method for creating presentations that are meaningful, memorable, and motivational.
- The JAM method for creating your presentation from first brainstorming to finished, polished product.
- How tools like the rule of threes can make your presentation more meaningful and memorable.
- How to structure the introduction, body, and conclusion of your presentation.

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Introduction

How do you feel when you are standing before the mic and about to begin speaking in front of a room full of people?

Perhaps you don't present very often and the idea of public speaking fills you with dread. Or, on the other end of the spectrum, maybe you present all the time and you feel totally comfortable commanding the attention of a room or a video conferencing session. What if you learned that how you feel about speaking in front of an audience is irrelevant as to whether you can be effective at it or not?

The aMMMazing Presentation Theory

The three Ms in aMMMazing represent the three hallmarks of exceptional presentations: meaningful, memorable, and motivational. A truly great presentation is all three of these things.

The three Ms mean that we are proactively involving the audience in multiple ways. We are trying to reach their heart by creating something meaningful for them. We are trying to involve their brain by structuring and presenting our information in a way that will make it memorable. We are also trying to influence our listeners' actions as we strive to motivate them.

We could say that the opposite of an ammmazing presentation is a BAD presentation: Boring And Dull. BAD presentations are forgettable because they can't connect with the audience and often overwhelm the listeners with too much information, audibly and visually.

The First M: Meaningful

How do we ensure that our presentations are meaningful to our audience? Here's the principle we should keep in mind whenever we have a new presentation to create: Ask questions first, create content later. It should be 'ready, aim fire!' instead of 'ready, fire, aim.'

There are three simple (but essential) questions to ask that will help you figure out what your audience wants to hear:

Who is my audience?

What do they care about?

What do I want them to do?

The answers to these questions help you to channel your thought process to include the right content in your presentation.

The Second M: Memorable

If you want to write memorable presentations, the first thing you need to embrace is this reality: your audience will not remember everything that you say. Embracing this reality is one of the most liberating concepts of all when it comes to writing presentations. Why? Because once you embrace this concept, you can take control of it.

You will realize that adding specific memory-aiding techniques to your presentation is a really good idea— techniques like mnemonics (creating acronyms) and repetition.

The Third M: Motivational

The last M in an aMMMazing presentation is where we need to ensure that our representation motivates our audience to do the goal that you identified for them.

If you have gone through the process of selecting only the most meaningful information to accomplish that goal and have applied the rule of three and other techniques to make it memorable, then your presentation will be inherently motivational to your audience.

Secrets of Structure

The concept of structure is one of the most fundamental, and often most overlooked, elements of presentations. To understand the value of having a clear structure, consider songwriting. There's a repeatable structure within songs that has been in use from the Beatles to U2 to Ed Sheeran. It often goes Verse-Chorus-Verse-Chorus-Bridge-Chorus.

Notice how the rule of three applies to this classic structure, with three choruses separated by verses and a bridge. Similarly, presentations that are easy on the ear have a clear three-part structure. They have an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.

A Meaningful Introduction

The purpose of the introduction is to establish why the topic is meaningful to your audience and set up the rest of your presentation. Your introduction is your opportunity to grab your listeners' attention and make them care about the information you are about to deliver. How long do you have to do this? Well, quick Google search will provide you with a range of answers, from 2.7 seconds to 15 seconds. Without getting into the well-researched data around each

number, the point is that you have mere seconds to grab the attention of your audience, not minutes. You have to say enough in the opening seconds of your presentation to grab their attention and make them want to listen to everything else you are going to say.

A Memorable Body

The purpose of the presentation body is to present your content in a memorable way. This is the part where you get into the main content of your material— the middle 'tell them' in the 'tell them, tell them, tell them' principle. The body of your presentation is where you will cover the most information and should be arranged around three main topics, should be easy to follow, and should include just the right amount of information. Not too much, and not too little.

If you are using visuals, ensure they appropriately support the words being spoken. Meanwhile, make your three main points clear, and fill your time with the appropriate amount of supporting detail. Allocate an appropriate amount of time for the information without rushing or skipping slides.

A Motivational Conclusion

There are three keys to a motivational conclusion— summarizing your main points, managing questions, and including a call to action.

When summarizing your main points, make it clear that the body of the presentation is over and the conclusion has now begun. Include a brief summary of all the key points discussed, and close the loop by revisiting the analogy, story, quote, and so-on used in the introduction.

When managing questions, allow time for questions only when appropriate. Anticipate difficult questions and have a strategy to handle them. Prepare a strong closing statement to share after questions have concluded.

Finally, include a call to action. Specify it with clarity and outline next steps, what to do, who to contact, and where to get more information. Provide a one-page summary of key ideas as a handout, rather than the entire slide deck.

The JAM Session Writing Process

The J: Jot Everything Down

The first phase of the JAM process involves setting aside time to gather and generate all of the content that will make up your presentation. There are a lot of methodologies and tools out there to help facilitate brainstorming and creative-thinking sessions. Without exploring the various benefits of the concepts of 'mind mapping,' 'thinking hats,' and 'lateral thinking techniques,' there's one concept that works every time.

To help you think creatively, use drawing tools, not writing or typing tools. These tools are designed to capture ideas as quickly as your mind thinks of them, without interrupting your thought process. Once you've done this, you can structure your ideas into an outline and create an initial script to work from.

The A: Articulate Your Words

You need to speak aloud while you are writing your presentation. Not after it's written, not when you're rehearsing the final script— while you're writing it. When you say your presentation out loud, you will want to make changes. By embracing this fact, you can use it to your advantage rather than feeling frustrated that you are making changes after you thought you were done.

When you speak out loud, you will hear what your ideas sound like. You can observe how well your information flows and how long it takes to cover everything you want. Then you can keep the things that sound good, ditch the things that don't, and change the things that need to be changed. Simply repeat this process until you've honed the speaking portion of your presentation into a well-oiled machine.

The M: Make Your Presentation Tools

At this point, you should have composed an end-to-end presentation that you could deliver without projecting any slides. It's a pretty safe assumption, however, that most presentation scenarios today come with the expectation that you will use a slide deck. Graphics can complement and reinforce your words, lending them added power, so we will include the creation of your slides in this phase. Start by visualizing your slide ideas, create the slides themselves, then speak along with them to identify areas where the connection between your words and visuals could be strengthened.

aMMMazing JAM Session Writing Process Checklist

Use this checklist to complete the steps for composing your presentations:

Jot Everything Down

Brainstorm ideas

- Who is your target audience? What do you want them to do? What do they need to know?
- Empty the pantry—extract ideas from existing content
- Explore ideas for your hook— an analogy, story, quote, statistic, news item, question

Use the rule of three

- Group related information and ideas into your introduction, body, and conclusion
- Arrange the body around three main ideas
- Do a sanity check (will the three main ideas really resonate with the audience?)

Script a draft

- Type up ideas to create a clean outline
- Fill in specific wording with your introduction, linking statements, and conclusion
- Add as much text as you'd like to complete your script

Articulate Your Words

Speak out loud

- Find a quiet space and read it aloud, start to finish
- Time yourself and get a feel for how much content you need to remove or add
- Jot down new ideas as they come to mind

Doctor your script

- Be ruthless. Cut unnecessary information.
- Be honest. Identify sections that drag or feel boring to talk through
- Be creative. Work new ideas, anecdotes, stories, or analogies into your script

Repeat until happy

- Speak through the script again
- Make additional script changes
- Finalize your script

Make Your Visuals

Visualize your ideas

- Print out or make a blank slide template
- Print out your script for easy reference
- Sketch slide ideas to match your script

Make your presentation tools

- Create your slide deck
- Create speaker notes
- Create a handout

Speak and tweak

- Find a quiet space with a projector, a pen and paper, and a timer
- Run through the presentation aloud with your deck, noting timing and edits required
- Make your tweaks and repeat until you are ready to deliver it



Glenn Gibson was born and raised in South Queensferry, Scotland, where he frequented the very pub (the Hawes Inn) that legendary Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson reportedly penned the literary classics *Kidnapped* and *Treasure Island*. Spending many an evening in this establishment with his friends and family inspired his dream of becoming an author. Glenn has combined his love of speaking and technology throughout his 20-year career in various roles, achieving technology certifications from Microsoft, Citrix, and VMware, and delivering technical support, teaching OnBase software installations, and running product marketing and technology evangelism teams.

Before the Mic: How to Compose Meaningful, Memorable, and Motivational Presentations by Glenn Gibson. © 2021 by Glenn Gibson. Summarized by permission of the publisher, Greenleaf Book Group Press. 224 pages, ISBN 978-1632993649. Summary copyright © 2022 by Soundview Book Summaries ®

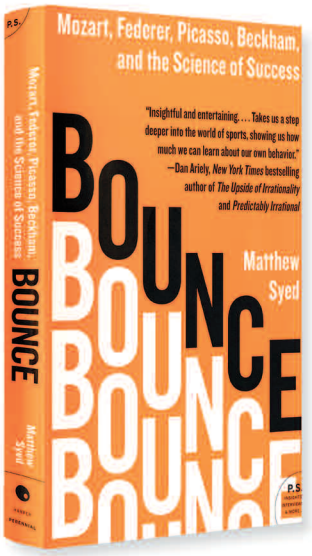
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Bounce

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Bounce

Mozart, Federer, Picasso, Beckham and the Science of Success



by Matthew Syed

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

We love to win and hate to lose, whether it's on the playing field, in the office or in the classroom. In this bold new look at human behavior, award-winning journalist and Olympian Matthew Syed explores the truth about our competitive nature — why we win, why we don't and how we really play the game of life.

Syed reveals how, over time and with the right kind of practice, not only the body changes but also the brain. This levels the playing field, so to speak; all individuals can accumulate the knowledge that creates excellence, regardless of where they started from.

Bounce reveals how competition — the most vivid, primal and dramatic of human pursuits — provides vital insight into many of the most controversial issues of our time. From biology and economics to psychology and culture, from genetics and race to sports and politics, *Bounce* shows how competition provides a master key with which to unlock the mysteries of the world.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why talent is a myth.
- The steps you need to take on the path to excellence.
- The mindsets that lead to life-changing action.
- The psychology behind words and choking.
- The secret depression that accompanies winning.
- How knowledge shapes perception.

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THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **BOUNCE**

by Matthew Syed

The author: Matthew Syed is a multi-award winning columnist for *The Times* of London. His numerous prizes include Sports Journalist of the Year at the British Press Awards.

Bounce: Mozart, Federer, Picasso, Beckham, and the Science of Success by Matthew Syed. Copyright © 2010 by Matthew Syed. Summarized by permission of the publisher, HarperPerennial, an Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers. 312 pages, $14.99, ISBN 978-0-06-172376-6.

To purchase this book, go to www.amazon.com or www.bn.com.

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For additional information on the author, go to www.summary.com.

PART I: THE TALENT MYTH

In January 1995, I became the British number-one table tennis player for the first time, which is a heck of an achievement. At 24 years of age, I suddenly found myself on the receiving end of regular invitations to speak to school audiences about my rise to international glory, and would often take my medals along to dazzle the youngsters.

What made me special? What marked me out for sporting greatness? I came up with a number of attributes: speed, guile, gutsiness, mental strength, adaptability, agility, reflexes. Despite being born into an ordinary family, I triumphed against the odds and now had a personal odyssey of success.

This is the typical way that many who have reached the top in sport, or any other field, choose to tell their story. Our culture encourages this soaring individualism and Hollywood is full of such narratives, often sugar-coated in American Dream sentimentality. But while these stories are inspirational and entertaining, are they true?

This is my story in table tennis, retold with the bits I chose to ignore the first time, as they diminished the romance and individuality of my triumph.

The Hidden Logic of Success

In 1978, my parents bought a table tennis table and put it in our large garage. Not many youngsters of my age in my hometown possessed a full-size, tournament-specification table. This was my first bit of good fortune.

My second piece of good fortune was having an older brother who came to love table tennis as much as I. We would play for hours in the garage after school: without knowing it, we were blissfully accumulating thousands of hours of practice.

The third was Peter Charters, a teacher at the local primary school. Mr. Charters cared about one thing above all: table tennis. He was the coach on almost all of the after-school sporting clubs, but these were just a front. He was the nation's top coach and a senior figure in the English Table Tennis Association and he scouted sporting talent wherever it emerged so he could focus it on table tennis. Charters invited my brother and I to join Omega in 1980, at the very moment we were outgrowing the garage.

Omega was a one-table hut in a gravel enclosure a couple of miles from where we lived in suburban Reading. It was not a luxurious club, but it had one advantage that made it almost unique anywhere in the country: it was open 24 hours a day for the exclusive use of its tiny group of members, each of whom had a set of keys. My brother and I took full advantage, training after school, before school, on weekends and during the holidays.

My parents describe my success in table tennis as an inspirational triumph against the odds. But what about the others who had all the advantages but didn't make it?

Practically every man or woman who triumphs against the odds is, on closer inspection, a beneficiary of unusual circumstances. The delusion lies in focusing on the individuality of their triumph without perceiving — or bothering to look for — the powerful opportunities stacked in their favor.

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Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries® (ISSN 0747-2196), 500 Old Forge Lane, Suite 501, Kennett Square, PA 19348 USA, a division of Concentrated Knowledge Corp. Published monthly. Subscriptions starting at $99 per year.
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What is Talent?

In 1991, Anders Ericsson, a psychologist at Florida State University, and two colleagues conducted an extensive investigation into the causes of outstanding performance. Their subjects — violinists at the renowned Music Academy of West Berlin in Germany — were divided into three groups.

The first group comprised the outstanding students: the kids who would normally be described as super talented, the ones supposedly lucky enough to have been born with special musical genes. The second group was extremely good, but not as accomplished as the top performers. The third group were the least able, most studying to become music teachers, a course with far less stringent admission standards.

The difference revealed between the groups at the end of the investigation was dramatic and unexpected; indeed, it was so stark that it almost jumped out at Ericsson and his colleagues — the number of hours devoted to serious practice. By the age of 20, the best violinists had practiced an average of 10,000 hours, more than 2,000 hours more than the good violinists and more than 6,000 hours more than the violinists hoping to become music teachers. These differences are extraordinary. Top performers had devoted thousands of additional hours to becoming master performers.

Ericsson also found that there were no exceptions to this pattern: nobody reached the elite group without copious practice and nobody who worked their socks off failed to excel. Purposeful practice was the only factor distinguishing the best from the rest.

So the question is: How long do you need to practice in order to achieve excellence? Extensive research has come up with a very specific answer to that question: from art to science and from board games to tennis, it has been found that a minimum of 10 years is required to reach world-class status in any complex task.

This is what Ericsson calls the iceberg illusion. When we witness extraordinary feats of sport or artistic prowess, we are witnessing the end product of a process measured in years. What is invisible to us — the submerged evidence — is the countless hours of practice that went into the virtuoso performance. The drills, the mastery of technique and form, and the solitary concentration have altered the anatomical and neurological structures of the master performer.

Knowledge is Power

Think about firefighters. Many young men are drawn to the profession because they think they're good at making decisions under pressure, but quickly discover they just can't cut it. When they look at a raging fire, they are drawn to the color and height of the flames and other perceptually salient features. Only after a decade or more of on-the-job training can they place what they are seeing within the context of an interwoven understanding of the patterns of fires.

It is the rapid escalation in the number of variables in many real-life situations — including sports — that makes it impossible to sift the evidence before making a decision: it would take too long. Good decision making is about compressing the informational load by decoding the meaning of patterns derived from experience. This cannot be taught in a classroom; it is not something you are born with; it must be lived and learned. To put it another way, knowledge emerges through practice.

The Path to Excellence

"When most people practice, they focus on the things they can do effortlessly," Ericsson has said. "Expert practice is different. It entails considerable, specific and sustained efforts to do something you can't do well — or even at all. Research across domains shows that it is only by working at what you can't do that you turn into the expert you want to become."

There is an even more vital facet of expertise, the *quality* of practice: the specialized learning used by top performers to attain master status and the deep concentration that is needed during each of those 10,000 hours to make them count.

Ericsson calls it "deliberate practice," to distinguish is from what most of the rest of us get up to. I am going to call it *purposeful* practice, because the practice sessions of aspiring champions have a specific and never-changing purpose: progress. Every second of every minute, the goal is to extend one's mind and body, to push oneself beyond the outer limits of one's capacities, to engage so deeply in the task that one leaves the training session, literally, a changed person.

Purposeful practice is about striving for what is just out of reach and not quite making it; it is about grappling with tasks beyond current limitations and falling short again and again. Excellence is about stepping outside the comfort zone, training with a spirit of endeavor, and accepting the inevitability of trials and tribulations. Progress is built upon the foundation of necessary failure. That is the essential paradox of expert performance.

Careful study has shown that creative innovation follows a very precise pattern: like excellence itself, it emerges from the rigors of purposeful practice. To put it

another way, eureka moments are not lightning bolts from the blue, but tidal waves that erupt following deep immersion in an area of expertise.

Take Pablo Picasso, an artist who is often held up as a perfect example of the lightning bolt theory of creativity. How else to explain how a man born in relative anonymity in the Spanish region of Andalusia came to produce some of the most innovative and influential artistic works of the 20th century?

Robert Weisberg, a psychologist at Temple University, discovered that the young Picasso spent his early years painstakingly drawing eyes and the human body in difficult poses: not just a few hours or weeks, but countless hours studiously learning his craft.

But Picasso's creative genius was not at all evident in his early career. His early paintings were of no greater merit than those of his peers. Yet these "failures" were not in conflict with his later genius; they were part and parcel of it. Precisely the same story reveals itself when looking at Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, whose early works were imitative and whose masterpieces emerged only after 18 years of practice.

Mysterious Sparks and Life-Changing Mind-Sets

Shaquille O'Neal was 17 years old when he heard the words that would change his life. He had just spent his summer at basketball camp, and for the first time had begun to doubt whether he had what it takes to become an NBA player.

When he got home, he told his mother that he was having doubts about his future in the sport. She responded by encouraging him to try harder, to which O'Neal responded, "I can't do that right now. Maybe later." Then his mother said the words that would change everything: "Later doesn't always come to everybody."

"Those words snapped me into reality and gave me a plan," O'Neal told Marlo Thomas for her book *The Right Words at the Right Time*. "You work hard now. You don't wait. If you work hard enough, you'll be given what you deserve. Everything got easier for me after that."

Have you ever experienced a transformational moment — what psychologist Michael Rousell calls a spontaneous influence event? A key factor driving success and failure is to be found within the realm of motivation. Sure, clocking up thousands of hours of purposeful practice ultimately determines how far we make it along the path to excellence, but it is only those who care about the destination, whose motivation is "internalized," who are ever going to get there.

Motivational Jolts

Motivation by association is a small, barely noticed connection searing deep into the subconscious and sparking a motivational response. It can be a shared birthday triggering a jolt of similarity with someone who is a high achiever in something. It could be sparked by a person winning a sporting event for their country.

If we widen the perspective, we will see that this pattern reveals itself time and time again. In 1962 Hans Alser won the European Championship in table tennis for Sweden. It was, at the time, an unforeseen triumph that mesmerized a nation. Nine years later Stellan Bengtsson, who had marveled at Alser's success as a youngster, won the World Championships, ushering in two decades of Swedish success at the very highest levels of the game.

The Talent Myth Revisited

The talent myth, as we have seen, is built on the idea that innate ability, rather than practice, is what ultimate-

More Perks of Expert Practice

Purposeful Practice has other benefits as well.

Brain Transformation: The body and mind can be radically altered with the right kind of practice. "When the human body is put under exceptional strain, a range of dormant genes in the DNA are expressed and extraordinary physiological processes are activated," Anders Ericsson wrote.

The Structure of Innovation: Careful study has shown that creative innovation follows a very precise pattern: like excellence itself, it emerges from the rigors of purposeful practice. Eureka moments are not lightning bolts from the blue, but tidal waves that erupt following deep immersion in an area of expertise.

Feedback Loops: With many activities, like steering a car, feedback is integral to the activity, but there are dozens of other areas — including sports and many jobs — where feedback must be actively sought. We need to know where we are going wrong if we are going to improve. Great coaches are able to design practice so that feedback is embedded in the drill, leading to automatic readjustment, which, in turn, improves the quality of feedback, generating further improvements and so on. If you can position yourself in this kind of feedback loop, improvements will escalate in ways that will astonish you.

ly determines whether we have it within us to achieve excellence. We have also seen that this is a rather corrosive idea. Why spend time and energy seeking to improve if success is available only to people with the right genes? But just how corrosive is this myth? In 1978 Carol Dweck, a professor at Stanford University and one of the most influential psychologists of modern times, asked that question.

Dweck's experiment was simple. She took 330 fifth- and sixth-graders and gave them a questionnaire to probe their beliefs about talent and, in particular, intelligence. Those students who held the belief that intelligence is set in genetic stone — i.e. the talent myth — had what Dweck would later call a fixed mind-set. Those who believed that intelligence can be transformed through effort had a growth mind-set. As the children toiled, two dramatically different patterns emerged.

Those in the fixed mind-set had a belief the test was measuring how intelligent they were now and also how intelligent they would be in the future. Their belief was that intelligence is fixed by innate talent. When they started the difficult problems, they lost faith in their intellect and their strategies deteriorated. The students in the growth mind-set, however, did not blame anything or even consider themselves to be failing. A full quarter of them actually improved.

Is it any wonder that a fixed mind-set interprets failure as calamitous; that it saps creativity and undermines future performance; that anything will be done to avoid challenges, even when challenges might be useful?

Think of life as having two paths: one leading to mediocrity, the other to excellence. The path to mediocrity is flat and straight. It's possible to cruise along on autopilot with a nice, smooth, steady, almost effortless progression. You can reach the destination without stumbling and falling over, whether you have a fixed or a growth mind-set.

The path to excellence, however, is very different. It is steep, grueling and arduous. It is lengthy, requiring a minimum of 10,000 hours of lung-busting effort to get to the summit. And, most important of all, it forces voyagers to stumble and fall on every single stretch of the journey — because this is the defining feature of purposeful practice, without which excellence is unattainable.

The implication hardly needs spelling out. A growth mind-set is perfectly suited to the achievement of excellence; a fixed mind-set, to the achievement of mediocrity. If your chosen destination is within the domain of excellence, you'd better have a growth mind-set. Why? Because a spark ignited in a fixed mind is likely to be extinguished at the first sign of failure.

The Power of Words

In 1998, Dweck performed another experiment. The students were given a series of tests starting with simple puzzles. Afterwards they were given their scores along with something else: six words of praise. Half the students were praised for intelligence: "You must be smart at this!" the other half were praised for effort: "You must have worked really hard!" Dweck wanted to test whether simple words with subtle differences would have a measurable impact on persistence and performance; whether they could mold the student's attitudes to success and failure.

Throughout the series of tests that followed, the student's choices and test scores were recorded. The results were remarkable.

The way the two groups responded to failure was dramatically different. The group praised for intelligence interpreted failures as proof they were no good at the task at all. The group praised for effort persevered on the test far longer, enjoyed it far more and did not suffer any loss in confidence.

When the experiment came full circle, the group praised for intelligence showed a 20 percent decline in performance, but those in the effort-praised group increased their scores by 30 percent — failure actually spurred them on.

These examples, taken from Dweck's book *Mindset*, hint at a radical new approach to the way we interact with students, aspiring sports stars or, indeed, anyone. That we should praise effort, not talent; that we should emphasize how abilities can be transformed through application; that we should interpret failure not as an indictment, but as an opportunity. ●

PART II: PARADOXES OF THE MIND

Excellence is not, on its own, sufficient for success. It is also necessary to translate one's abilities into peak performance. We know it when we see it: We see it in Tiger Woods sinking a 12-foot putt to win the U.S. Masters without flinching; we see it in David Beckham bending the ball around a wall from thirty yards to save a match for the England soccer team.

How do they do it? Where does the mental assurance come from? Can it be learned?

In early 1944, Allied forces launched an offensive foray at Anzio in northern Italy during World War II. It turned out to be a disastrous maneuver, with American forces trapped in the caves of Pozzoli for more than a

week. Henry Beecher, a young doctor from Harvard, was the man responsible for treating the influx of injured American soldiers at a makeshift field hospital at the beachhead.

Such was the scale of casualties that Beecher soon ran out of anesthetic. Confronted with a soldier with gaping wounds and needing to operate quickly, he therefore instructed his nurse to administer a saltwater injection instead of morphine. The patient, assuming that a proper dose of anesthesia had been administered, lay back in preparation for his operation. What happened next would come to shake the medical world.

Beecher found that the soldier was not merely comforted by the injection of salt water; he was able to tolerate the agonies of surgery as well as if he had been injected with "real" anesthetic. Over the next few weeks Beecher was to replicate the result with dozens of wounded soldiers, each of whom could bear, with seemingly miraculous stoicism, the trauma of surgery with nothing more than salt water running through their veins. When he returned, Beecher wrote a paper called, "The Power of Placebo."

The key point in all this is that the power of the mind is exercised through the medium of belief, and it doesn't matter whether the belief is true or false or how the delusion is treated, so long as it is created successfully. It does not matter if it is supported by fabricated evidence or no evidence at all. All that matters is that the patient believes.

The Placebo Effect in Sports

Listen to a top athlete talking in the moments before he is about to play a big match, and you will hear statements bordering on nonsense. After more than 30 years of sports psychology, we have gotten used to this psychobabble, so we are, to a large extent, deaf to its specific kind of incoherence.

Norman Vincent Peale makes this point in *The Power of Positive Thinking*: "I am now convinced that if you expect the best, you are given some strange kind of power to create the conditions that produce the desired results." Anne Harrington of Harvard University makes the same point: "There is an innate capacity for our bodies to bring into being, to the best of their ability, the optimistic scenarios in which we fervently believe."

This is what we might dub the "performance placebo," but the trick of sports psychology has been to divorce it from religion; to ground optimism not in the interventionism of the Almighty, but in an exaggerated belief in the efficacy of the self; to remove uncertainty by building conviction in one's capacity to achieve.

George Orwell, *1984* and Doublethink

Anyone who has read George Orwell's *1984* will find the idea of doublethink curiously familiar. In it, Orwell introduces the term and describes it as follows:

"Doublethink means the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them… To forget any fact that has become inconvenient, and then, when it becomes necessary again, to draw it back from oblivion for just so long as is needed…. All this is indispensably necessary."

At the time of publication of *1984*, many critics argued that doublethink was psychologically implausible, but it is, in fact, commonplace. Doublethink is essential to the success of leading athletes and other top performers.

That is why athletes refuse to entertain the possibility of defeat — they are aware that doubt is as dangerous a thing when entering the field of play as it is when swallowing a sugar pill.

Irrational Optimism

The great irony of performance psychology is that it teaches each sportsman to believe, as far as he is able, that he will win. No man doubts. No man indulges his inner skepticism. That is the logic of sports psychology. Doubt to an athlete is poison. Progress is made by ignoring the evidence; it is about creating a mind-set that is immune to doubt and uncertainty.

As Arsene Wenger, one of the most successful soccer club managers of recent times puts it: "To perform to your maximum, you have to teach yourself to believe with an intensity that goes way beyond logical justification. No top performer has lacked this capacity for irrational optimism; no sportsman has played to his potential without the ability to remove doubt from his mind."

You may have heard the expression — "taking the positives" — from top sportsmen and sportswomen. It is a psychological technique so universal that is has become part of the lexicon. What does it mean? It is about ignoring aspects of a performance that contradict one's prior optimism while focusing on the good tactics, the winning shots, etc., that support it.

To put it another way, top athletes have learned to filter out unwanted evidence in order to sustain an exaggerated belief in their own abilities. ●

The Curse of Choking and How to Avoid It

Many hours of practice enables athletes and other performers to encode the necessary movements in implicit, rather than explicit, memory. Consciously monitoring the movements painstakingly builds up the neural framework to support good execution. Only after many hours can the execution be done without having to think about it.

This migration from explicit to implicit system of the brain has two crucial advantages. First it enables the expert player to integrate the various parts of a complex skill into one fluent whole, something that would be impossible at a conscious level because there are too many interconnecting variables for the conscious mind to handle. And second, it frees up attention to focus on higher-level aspects of the skill, such as tactics and strategy.

Imagine if an expert were to suddenly find himself using the "wrong" brain system. It wouldn't matter if her were the greatest player of all time or merely a decent club player because he would now be at the mercy of the explicit, rather than the implicit, system. The highly sophisticated skills encoded in the implicit part of his brain would count for nothing. He would find himself striving for victory using neural pathways he last used as a novice.

This happens because directing attention to the mechanics of the shot is likely to be catastrophic because there are too many interconnecting variables for the conscious mind to handle. The problem is not a lack of focus, but too much focus. Conscious monitoring disrupts the smooth workings of the implicit system. The sequencing and timing of the different motor responses are fragmented, just as they would be with a novice. The expert is, effectively, a beginner again.

So, how to overcome choking? Considering that choking only ever occurs in highly pressurized circumstances, what better way than to convince oneself that a career-defining moment doesn't really matter? After all, if the performer does not feel any pressure, there is no pressure, and the conscious mind will not attempt to wrestle control from the implicit system.

Mark Bawden, a sports psychologist who worked with Sarah Lindsay at the Olympics in Salt Lake City, puts it like this: "In order to make all the sacrifices necessary to reach world-class levels of performance, an athlete has to believe that performing well means everything. But that is precisely the belief that is most likely to trigger choking. The key psychological skill for someone with a tendency to choke is to ditch that belief in the minutes before competition and to replace it with the belief that the race does not really matter. It is a form of psychological manipulation, and it takes a lot of work to master." ●

Baseball Rituals, Pigeons and Why Great Sportsmen Feel Miserable After Winning

Tennis players are a strange bunch. Have you noticed how they always ask for three balls instead of two; how they keep using the towel between points, not to remove sweat, but to erase the demons from their mind? It sometimes seems as if Wimbledon is less a tennis competition than a giant obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) convention.

But for sheer variety of superstitions, there is nothing to match baseball, a sport in which it sometimes seems as if a bizarre ritual is a condition of entry into the major leagues. Pitcher Greg Swindell would bite the tip off one of his fingernails before each start and hold it in his mouth for the entire game.

Do these superstitions work? If not, why are they clung to so fiercely? And what does all this tell us about ritual and rationality in the wider world?

The answer is to be found in the world of pigeons. This may sound a little strange, but it was the firm opinion of B.F. Skinner, the man widely regarded as the father of modern psychology.

Skinner's view was based on a groundbreaking experiment in 1947 in which he placed some hungry pigeons in a cage attached to an automatic mechanism that delivered food "at regular intervals with no reference whatsoever to the bird's behavior." He discovered that the pigeons associated the delivery of the food with whatever chance actions they happened to be performing at the moment it was first delivered. So what did the pigeons do? They kept performing the same actions, even though these had no effect whatsoever on the release of food.

The fact that pigeons and human beings share superstitious tendencies suggests that this kind of behavior emerged quite early in evolutionary history. What is certain is that it is widespread, particularly within Homo sapiens. In a recent poll, more than half of Americans admitted to being superstitious.

Of course, some rituals may have a genuine impact on performance. The very fact they have become part of a well-established routine may help an athlete to relax and

feel comfortable, aiding clear thinking and reducing anxiety. Rituals may also exert a placebo effect; as we saw earlier, believing strongly that something works can, in circumstances where the outcome is under personal control, make it more likely that it will actually work.

It is only when a superstition compromises our deeper aspirations that we have moved along the spectrum of irrationality far enough to risk a diagnosis of OCD. When a superstition that is supposed to help you actually harms you, it is probably time to kick out the ritual. Using a rabbit's foot, obviously.

The Aftermath of Winning

Have you ever nurtured an ambition so precious that it became like a dear friend? But when you attain it, it vanishes in a detonation of euphoria? As Robert Louis Stevenson, a man who knew a thing or two about the ironies of the human psyche, wrote: "To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive."

Seen in an evolutionary context, so-called negative emotions — like the sense of loss after a great win — start to look different: anxiety facilitates escape from dangerous situations and helps us avoid them in the future; mild depression enables us to disengage from unattainable goals.

From this vantage point, anticlimax makes perfect sense. Millions of years of natural selection have sifted sequences of DNA just so we can feel miserable in the aftermath of long-coveted triumph. Why? So that we are able to disengage from our triumph, enabling us to focus on the next challenge. If goal fulfillment induced indefinite periods of contentment, we would be robbed of all future motivation.

For a triumphant athlete, anticlimax is the emotional lull that lays the psychological foundations for the next tilt at golf. For an award-winning writer, it is the melancholy that provides the creative impetus for the next literary adventure. For a lottery winner, it is the sense of hollowness that makes her want to go out to work again. ●

PART III: DEEP REFLECTIONS

Why is it that top athletes seem to perceive faster, smarter and deeper than the rest of us?

A key difference between experts and novices is that experts are better at extracting information from what is going on around them. Roger Federer, 16-time Grand Slam champion, for example, can anticipate the movement of a tennis ball more efficiently than the rest of us, not because he has better eyesight, but because he knows where to look and how to interpret the movement patterns of his opponent.

When Federer plays tennis, he does not make better inferences from a universally accessible pool of sensory information; rather he sees and hears the world in an entirely different way.

Similarly, expert firefighters are able to figure out how to combat a raging blaze because they have learned to grasp subtle visual cues revealing their dynamics.

These insights help unlock some of the deepest mysteries of sport. It is as if top athletes are wearing X-ray goggles, providing perceptual access to a realm of spins, shapes, curves and patterns denied to the rest of us.

The key point in all this is that knowledge is not used merely to make sense of perceptions; knowledge is embedded in perception. As the great British philosopher Sir Peter Strawson put it, "Perception is thoroughly permeated by our concepts."

Inattentional Blindness

Attention is a resource with severe capacity limitations. As we make our way through the world (or take part in a sports contest), we are bombarded by so much sensory information that it is impossible to process it all consciously. Attention acts as kind of a filter system that permits only a certain amount of information to hit conscious awareness. But if attention is at overload, we are unable to perceive things that are actually there, right in front of our noses.

Top athletes use inattentional blindness to see where the ball is going before their opponent actually hits it; they have delegated the inference to the higher areas of the brain. Delegating the stroke to the brain's implicit system means that they have plenty of available attention with which to think strategically and to deal with looming emergencies, such as a sudden switch in tactics from their opponent. It is often the difference between success and failure. ●

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Bounce*, you'll also like:

1. ***Talent is Overrated* by Geoff Colvin.** What's the real solution to the mystery of high performance? Learn about the highly specific kind of effort that Colvin calls "deliberate practice."
2. ***You Already Know How to Be Great* by Alan Fine.** Fine, an accomplished tennis, golf and executive coach, reveals the G.R.O.W. (Goal, Reality, Options, Way Forward) method to increased performance.
3. ***Clutch* by Paul Sullivan.** Do you choke under pressure or are you "clutch"? Featuring examples from a variety of fields, you will learn how to successfully perform under extraordinary pressure.

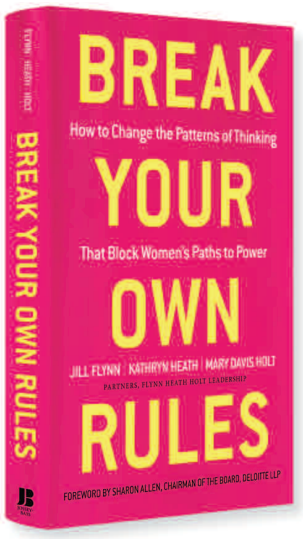
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Break Your Own Rules

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Break Your Own Rules

How to Change the Patterns of Thinking That Block Women's Paths to Power



by Jill Flynn, Kathryn Heath and Mary Davis Holt

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

"We have a dream. It is a big vision ... it is a leap ... and it is audacious: We want to see women make up at least 30 percent of the top leadership positions in corporate America within the next 10 years. ... America's corporations will be better led and everyone will benefit."

It's time for women everywhere to re-imagine leadership — and put themselves at the top. The good news is that we know exactly how to make this happen: *Break Your Own Rules* distills the six faulty assumptions (or "rules") most women follow that get in the way of achieving their full potential — then delivers the correlating new rules that promise to clear the path all the way to the executive boardroom.

Authors Jill Flynn, Kathryn Heath and Mary Davis Holt have coached and trained more than 5,000 women and helped them earn high-powered corporate positions. Based on their latest research, years of coaching successful business women and more than 1,700 interviews with executives in Fortune 500 companies, *Break Your Own Rules* reveals how women everywhere can start to change the thinking that drives their actions — and start winning in greater numbers.

This hands-on guide is for any woman who is ready to transform her assumptions and join the senior ranks of American business.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Six behaviors that keep even the most achievement-oriented women from reaching their highest potential.
- Six new doable practices that can move you where you want to go.
- Why so few women run organizations today and what every woman can do Monday morning to change that.
- How women everywhere can start to revolutionize their workplaces, their homes and their communities.

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THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **BREAK YOUR OWN RULES**

by Jill Flynn, Kathryn Heath and Mary Davis Holt

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Our Vision

We have a dream. It is a big vision ... it is a leap ... and it is audacious: We want to see women make up at least 30 percent of the top leadership positions in corporate America within the next 10 years. We believe that 30 percent will be a tipping point. When 30 percent of corporate leaders are women, the goals and direction of corporate America will change. The Old Rules will be shattered. America's corporations will be better led, and everyone will benefit.

We have a way to go before our vision becomes a reality. Despite the positive impact women leaders have on corporate performance, very few of us hold the top slots in major organizations. As of now, there were just 13 women CEOs steering Fortune 500 companies. That translates to less than a lowly 3 percent — and the number hasn't risen in recent years. For each new woman who enters Fortune's list, another falls off. This is a kick in the gut, considering that women not only outnumber men as a percentage of the total work force but also earn more undergraduate and graduate degrees than men.

And then there is the matter of take-home pay. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, women's wages came in at about 79 percent of men's in 2008. We won't dispute that there has been some progress made in recent decades, but the wage gap still exists — and it's significant.

In an age when more women are taking over power positions in global politics, poor representation in the business sector and the lack of equity are surprising. Something's very wrong here. Some of this is certainly gender bias; that much we know. If you believe that human nature dictates that senior leaders hire people who are like themselves, then you will figure that men open the gate for other men, and women don't rise through the ranks as easily. We also have stereotypes to contend with, which cast doubts on women's leadership style and even our competitive drive.

Female Representation at the Top

These interrelated realities persist despite the fact that they are proven to be bad for business. Research published by Deloitte, for example, argues that companies with women leaders perform better. The report points to a higher return on equity and higher return on sales for companies with more women board directors. Another study that tracked 1,500 U.S. companies from 1992 to 2006 found a direct positive correlation between the number of senior women managers and financial performance, including market value of the firm, sales growth and return on equity. After all, what better way to be sure that your products and services reflect the true needs of female consumers and decision makers — with all that purchasing power — than by having adequate female representation at the top of your corporation?

One study out of Pepperdine University, conducted over a 19-year period, determined that those firms with a higher number of women executives outperformed their competitors on key financial measures, including profitability and return on assets. Sylvia Ann Hewlett,

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Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries® (ISSN 0747-2196), 500 Old Forge Lane, Suite 501, Kennett Square, PA 19348 USA, a division of Concentrated Knowledge Corp. Published monthly. Subscriptions starting at $99 per year.
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Rebecca S. Clement, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor In Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Amanda Langen**, Graphic Designer; **Chris Lauer**, Contributing Editor

founder and president of the Center for Work-Life Policy, corroborates these findings: "The fewer female managers a company has, the greater drop in its share price since January 2008. The facts couldn't be clearer: Smart women equal stronger companies."

What We Believe

Technical knowledge in one's field is essential, and leadership skills are crucial. However, we have found that for women who are at midcareer or near the top, building career momentum is not a matter of adding skills. It is about determining what's keeping you where you are and figuring out how you might be getting in your own way.

We believe that for women to rise to the highest ranks in business, we need to unwind some of our traditional thinking and break our own rules. We have to rethink the conversations we are having in our heads and tell ourselves a new story.

Break Your Own Rules

In our coaching sessions with women who want to break into top leadership roles, we propose simple steps to help them increase their chances of success. These steps require women to make adjustments in how they think about themselves. We'll offer you the same advice:

By thinking differently, you'll find it much easier to act differently. By acting differently, your voice will be heard, and you will be considered for the job opportunities you really want.

To move into an executive role, you'll have to break some of your own rules; these are the beliefs and attitudes about yourself and the workplace that have gotten you this far. As Marshall Goldsmith has said, "What got you here won't get you there." It's one thing to get your foot in the door and begin to prove yourself at a company. You deal with tough clients, you hire the right people and develop your team, and you bring in business. All of this sets you up for success. However, it's another thing entirely to begin to scale the heights of an organization and to put yourself in line for the top jobs. The mindset at the top is completely different.

We present the new thinking that we believe will get you there. We call this thinking the New Rules. Our in-depth research and the lessons each of us has learned from making many mistakes of our own have shown us that these New Rules are decisive in propelling women into the next phases of their careers.

The Old Rules

Before we proceed, let's have a look at the Old Rules. Keep in mind that we are not labeling these thoughts and behaviors as "bad." The fact is, we've been there and have made all of these mistakes ourselves along the way. We identify with you and with the women we coach every day. Our hope is that by reading this book you'll be able to bypass some of these stumbling blocks on your way to career success.

- **Focus on Others (Instead of Taking Center Stage).** Many talented women find it natural to focus their attention on helping others succeed instead of spending their precious time nurturing their own career success.
- **Seek Approval (Instead of Proceeding Until Apprehended).** In our coaching sessions, we've worked with countless women executives who are exceptionally collaborative leaders. We'll tell you how to change your thinking in order to proceed on your own authority effectively and with confidence.
- **Be Modest (Instead of Projecting Personal Power).** Many women who are motivated to move into leadership positions are nonetheless ambivalent about projecting power. Modesty and self-deprecation come more naturally. We'll unwind the self-limiting beliefs that cause women to distance themselves from projecting personal power at work.
- **Work Harder (Instead of Being Politically Savvy).** Many women are disappointed when their hard work and long hours don't seem to pay off in terms of career advancement. But working harder is not the key to getting promoted and it's certainly not going to deliver the life you want.
- **Play It Safe (Instead of Playing to Win).** If you want to set yourself apart, you have to play to win. This includes making yourself visible and taking the lead in high-stakes situations. We'll demonstrate how to stop letting others take the lead and to think differently in order to become more comfortable living with risk.
- **It's All or Nothing (Instead of Both-And).** Black-and-white thinking does not lead to career success or personal satisfaction. Because complexity and constant change are everywhere in business and in our world today, dealing with ambiguity has become a primary leadership trait that women need to master. It is no coincidence that many of the women who are trying to have it all are also the ones who are most disappointed and frustrated.

Take Center Stage

Having a firm vision of your own aspirations and strengths — and allowing other people to help you succeed — is good for you and everyone around you. Achieving both success and satisfaction requires making choices that allow you to invest in yourself and live into the larger plan you have for yourself and your life. Let's look at the seven components of this New Rule.

The New Rules

1. Take your goals and dreams seriously. Focusing on your personal goals instead of being the one who nurtures everyone around you requires a certain amount of courage.

2. Think bigger. Aim higher. If you knew you could not fail, what would you want to do in your career? Think bigger ... Aim higher.

The most important thing you can do for yourself as a professional woman is to determine what it is you want from your career.

As you clarify your ambitions, write them down. In a couple of weeks, as you become more comfortable with your dreams and aspirations, identify one or two people whom you can trust ... and tell them. Next, seek out role models. Find out how each one became comfortable setting ambitious goals for herself.

3. Just say no. Doing "women's work" at the office is bad for your confidence and worse for your career.

Are you the office go-to girl for party planning, philanthropic pursuits and after-work self-defense classes? What about at home? How do you feel routinely taking responsibility for every little thing?

Even beyond women's work, it's important to set boundaries. When a colleague asks you to sit in on a meeting or read a report, take a moment to decide if it's work you should do. Without that deliberation, you may find yourself owning work that is someone else's. Instead of helping a colleague prepare a presentation, suggest someone else who can do it. When all else fails, remember what Nelson Mandela says: "No is a complete sentence."

4. Be ruthless with your calendar. Here is an assignment. Take out your calendar for the past month and analyze it closely. Ask yourself, *How much time am I spending in a given month on other people's priorities, other people's meetings, other people's development and support?*

After you have analyzed your calendar, identify at least two actions you can take to be more purposeful about the way you spend time.

5. Take time to re-fuel. Figure out ways to minimize your contact with people and activities that sap your energy. Obviously, we cannot eliminate all of these encounters in our lives, but we can work to consciously reduce the number of them. Next, schedule two or three ways to refuel your energy every single day. Is it working out? Having lunch with a friend? Reading a novel? Watching a movie? Do whatever works for you. Refueling will help you sustain your pace.

6. Get famous for something. What is your brand? Are you known as someone with deep technical skills, as someone who can fix projects that are in the ditch, as someone who makes great sales presentations?

Whatever your passion or expertise entails, being the best (and best known) for something is one of the fastest ways to gain access to center stage.

7. Practice taking center stage. Lynne Ford, CEO of ING Individual Retirement, told us how she worked on her stage presence: "I really got into playing out the scene in my head; seeing myself giving the presentation. I found that I had to master the content first, and then I focused on the visual presentation.

"By trial and error I was able to get better. After a while, no one was reading papers anymore at the back of the room."

Being center stage does not come naturally to most of us, even men. They may want you to believe that it does ... but it doesn't. ●

Proceed Until Apprehended

It may seem obvious that we need to step forward and lobby for the opportunities we want, but the reality is that many of us expect doors to open based on our hard work and track record.

The New Rules

1. Don't wait for permission. There are plenty of instances in life when proper protocol entails obeying the rules. However, there are many *other* times when you need to give yourself the green light to proceed.

Being bold and resolute takes practice. The best way to add assertiveness to your repertoire is by looking for opportunities to flex your muscles. Here are some hints to help you proceed until apprehended:

- *Act like you mean it.* It's not just what you say, but how you say it that causes people to take your authority seriously. Speak honestly and directly with a minimum of "in my opinion" qualifiers.
- *Break a few rules.* Do things your own way once in

a while and show people that you are your own person.

- *Be the dissenter.* Being assertive means you need to learn to be comfortable delivering bad news or an opposing position.
- *Don't overdo it.* Assertiveness and aggression are two altogether different things. Being assertive means that you effectively stand up for yourself, your point of view and your interests. But being labeled overly aggressive, especially as a woman, will have the opposite effect: You'll lose credibility, and colleagues will stop listening.

2. Make things happen. If you want to be viewed as senior leader material, you need to demonstrate that you can inspire others and make change happen. So step out of your comfort zone and rise to the challenge.

3. Fake it 'til you make it. Sometimes you just need to take a deep breath and put on your game face. When we interviewed her for this book, Cathy Bessant, the global technology and operations executive for Bank of America, told us: "You know, when guys lose their confidence they just bravado right through it. They puff their chest out and fake it 'til they make it. They do a much better job at this than we women do. But I'm an example of a woman who is learning how." ●

Project Personal Power

Mary Matalin, political consultant and CNN contributor, told us that projecting personal power is all about confidence. "You become the way you behave," she said. We've found that to be true. We use these New Rules to teach our clients to wield their personal power effectively.

The New Rules

1. Exude poise, confidence and power. We use video cameras in our coaching and training sessions in order to help individual women see how they come across to others. Most of the women we coach are unanimous in their dislike for this process, but they admit that it is a powerful technique.

To exude poise, confidence and power, we have to pay attention to our verbals and our nonverbals. The videotape is like a mirror. Once we see ourselves on tape, we can begin to practice making small changes that will add up to creating a major impact.

2. Take credit for your hard work. When Sharon Allen became chairman of Deloitte & Touche USA in 2003, she became not only the highest-ranking woman in the firm's history but also the first woman to hold that role at a leading professional services firm. It's not surprising, then, that Allen would have some practical wisdom to impart.

Allen said, "Through my experience, I've realized that many women think if they work hard, others will recognize their accomplishments and they'll be rewarded. What I've learned is that it's important to ensure that those around you recognize your accomplishments and the contributions you've made. And there are ways to do that without being a braggart."

3. Don't confide your insecurities. Grace under pressure is not the easiest thing to achieve. We like to tell our clients to think of a swan gliding across the water: majestic and graceful above the water, but chaotic underneath — pedaling its feet fast and furiously to keep forward momentum. It's fine to feel the chaos, but best to try to display that outward calm.

4. Practice your power skills. Changing our "natural" ways of behaving can be a challenge; however, learning how to project personal power is a must if we want to succeed at senior levels.

You can learn what type of impact you are making on others and make changes to enhance your personal power. ●

Be Politically Savvy

If maneuvering through the political aspects of your career doesn't come easily to you, don't despair. We'd be willing to bet that even the most savvy women executives had to work at mastering their technique. We can help.

The New Rules

1. Recognize that women excel at politics. As we write this, there are 10 female presidents, including in Argentina, Costa Rica, India, Ireland, Liberia and Switzerland. In addition, there are 11 women prime ministers in such places as Australia, Bangladesh, Croatia, Finland, Germany and Slovakia. Although we won't assert that gender equity is improving rapidly in many sectors, women are making strides across the globe and flexing their political muscle in government.

Women have proved to be adept at maneuvering in purely political situations, everywhere from philanthropy and small business to family management and local politics. Women, after all, are natural consensus builders who must navigate tricky terrain.When women in our workshops tell us they need remedial work on office politics, we ask them to reflect on the nonbusiness parts of their lives.

2. Be in the know. Do you know how business is done in your company? Being "in the know" makes office politics much easier to navigate. Here are a few practical tips to help you see which information sources to tap into and what people to count on when you're facing a challenge:

- *Lose the org chart.* Every company is different, but most settings have informal social networks that are just as important as the established corporate hierarchy — if not more so. It's worth your while, therefore, to actually chart the peer groups who have influence.
- *Connect the dots.* Once you've charted the key social networks, map your needs against that structure. You'll be able to use the chart whenever you are trying to build consensus around a particular idea or need.
- *Understand the numbers.* Data on the company balance sheet say it all. The sooner you feel comfortable eyeballing spread sheets, the sooner you can actually start to read between the line items to determine what's relevant to you.
- *Get connected.* Practice being fully present in meetings and in conversation. Be purposeful. Figure it out.

3. Run for office at the office. We coach women to realize that, at a certain point, they need to campaign for their career. It is naive to believe that you will be selected for high-level jobs without making your career aspirations transparent and building support for yourself.

Here are some of the components for our framework for being politically savvy without selling your soul:

- *Build a platform.* When you have something important to accomplish, you need a point of view. Building a platform at work means prioritizing your goals, and creating a formal pitch and message to bring them to life.
- *Build a coalition.* First, identify like-minded people who have goals that are similar to yours, and create a bridge that further links your interests. Second, identify the people who are likely to stand in your way because their interests diverge, and determine if there are ways to create alignment. Think about what sorts of people are missing from your coalition — top executives, technical experts, support staff — and decide whom you'll bring on board to fill the gaps. Finally, identify the people who will never be in a position to support your interests, and consider how to appease them or mitigate the concerns they may raise.

You Are a Natural at Politics

See for yourself: Assemble a list that represents the relationships you manage, the decisions you make on behalf of yourself and others, and all of the everyday negotiations that you accomplish without a second thought. This list should be all that you need to remind yourself that you are naturally effective in political situations. Thinking about how savvy you've been in other contexts can give you the confidence you need to demonstrate political prowess at work.

Our point is this: You are a natural.

- *Line up sponsors.* Sponsors expose their protégés to choice assignments and fight to get them promoted.

4. Become a political activist. You can't opt out of office politics. If you're not sure how to crack your company code, identify someone who seems especially comfortable building coalitions and who is well networked within your company, and interview that person to find out how he or she approaches it.

Political savvy is not a skill that comes naturally to many of us. The good news is that changing your thinking about politics and realizing that it is an important part of your existing job make it easier to commit to some small adjustments that can have a big impact on your career opportunities.

Career coach Kathryn Mayer put it nicely: "You can be yourself, maintain integrity and leverage your relationship skills to garner support and recognition of your ideas and advance your career. That's what political savvy is all about." ●

Play to Win

In our research, we have found a theme running through the topic of women and risk. We heard over and over that women must be bolder, get out of their comfort zone, take risks and play to win.

Let's look at some of the New Rules that are associated with the Play to Win mindset.

The New Rules

1. It is a game. Over and over again we advise women to become crystal clear on what specific deliverables signify success.

You cannot win unless you have a clear sense of what success is.

2. Reinvent yourself. Staying put in a job that's lost

all appeal and isn't leading you to better things is riskier than taking a chance on change. The longer you stay put, the more difficult it can be to summon the courage and vision required to tackle what's next.

3. Leave your trapeze. The American futurist Marilyn Ferguson said, "It is not so much that we're afraid of change or so in love with the old ways, but it's that place in between that we fear. It's like being between trapezes. It's Linus when his blanket is in the dryer. There's nothing to hold on to."

4. Be a risk taker. Becoming comfortable with risk and change is one thing. Actually leading the change is quite another. Still, if you are frustrated with the inefficiencies you see all around you, why not take the initiative and improve the situation? It's a great way to establish yourself as a leader and a problem solver.

5. Be a rainmaker. Women who can sell are powerful. There's no two ways about it: Rainmakers get promoted. Why? Because they bring in business? And you don't need to be on the sales team to be a rainmaker. If you are managing client relationships, closing deals of any sort or even managing a team of customer-facing contributors — you can use your skills to become visible by bringing revenue and customers into the organization. Julie Morgenstern, author of the book *Never Check E-Mail in the Morning*, says, "Dance close to the revenue line."

6. Do-overs are fine. The important feature of failure is the ability to learn from your mistakes and to pick yourself up to start again. In many cases, do-overs are fine, because past experiences make you smarter. Great managers instill this value in their people. ●

It's Both-And

The "all-or-nothing" trap robs us of satisfaction and success. Luckily, it is a great place to start to break our own rules.

The New Rules

1. Don't limit yourself. Adopting a Both-And mindset requires us to break away from negative and extreme thinking. Research tells us that having a positive outlook lowers anxiety and actually increases lifespan. Not only that, optimists have better coping skills when the going gets tough.

2. Just get over it. We've found that women prefer everything to proceed along smoothly; we are more bothered than men by the little bumps in the road. Although it is easier said than done, sometimes we'd be a lot happier if we simply decided to let go of the little things that don't amount to much.

'Blending' Work and Family

In our interview with Bonnie St. John, Olympic champion, motivational speaker and author of *Live Your Joy*, she tells us about an "aha" moment: "For me, the epiphany was that it doesn't need to be a teeter-totter. I avoid the extreme ups and downs and guilt. Instead, it's what I call blending." By "blending," St. John means that she has created a life that brings work and family aspirations together in a fluid way. It allows for personal satisfaction and control. St. John looks for creative solutions to accomplishing her goals, but she's not doing every little thing herself — only the important things. She goes on to say, "With blending, there is a possibility of having more of both. It isn't simple, it isn't trivial, but it is possible."

What we love about St. John's perspective is that she's found a smart, holistic way to think about her world — one that allows her to live into her goals without making herself crazy. She's breaking her own rules and creating new ones that work for her.

3. Be an entrepreneur. Being able to adapt to adversity and thrive in ambiguous situations has become a primary career survival skill. Change, as they say, is the new normal.

Given these challenges, we find ourselves coaching women to have an entrepreneurial perspective. Even in a big-business setting, being an entrepreneur opens you up to a world of possibilities.

4. Get centered. Maintaining a satisfying work-life balance sometimes feels like a hopeless struggle. But even if genuine work-life balance is a big fat myth, the kind of balance we're talking about is emotional — being on an even keel and having a handle on the priorities in your life. Like Olympic champion Bonnie St. John *[see sidebar]*, think of it as blending, not balancing.

5. Call in reinforcements. Having a support network is a prerequisite not only for career success, but also for maintaining that blending of work and home that allows you to have a well-rounded life. ●

Stand Together and Close Ranks

We've told you our big dream: We want to see women make up at least 30 percent of the leaders at the top levels of corporate America within the next 10 years. We believe that 30 percent will be a tipping point for change — a change that will be positive not just for women but for everyone.

Let's review what we know. We're good for the bottom line. The research firm Catalyst studied 353 Fortune 500 companies and found that those with more women serving as senior leaders had significantly higher returns on equity.

But despite all the good news and steady progress, we're a long way from achieving equal leadership representation at the most senior ranks. We believe that to get red suits at the table, women must stand together and be the drivers of change at three levels: We need individual, group and systemic change.

Individual Level: Awareness, Choice, Then Change

We work with women every day to encourage them to break their own rules. Our framework for change at the individual level consists of three phases:

- **Awareness.** Good leaders are self-aware — they have an accurate understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, their accomplishments and needs.
- **Choice.** Once you have gathered enough information to see how you are being perceived, you have an opportunity for change. It's up to you to make the move. Change requires a decision. You can decide to change or stay the same. Actually making the decision to change is a powerful act.
- **Change.** Once you have decided to make a change, put together a plan for yourself.

Group Level: Women Supporting Other Women

We are passionate believers in the idea that women must help other women succeed. In our interview with Gail Evans, former CNN executive and author of *Play Like a Man, Win Like a Woman*, she put it this way: "We need to push each other up. The guys push each other up all the time. And if they don't succeed, they just slap each other on the back and say *It was a good try; we'll go for it next time*. We have to do the same — we must surround ourselves with supportive women who will give us a boost."

A second way that women can support women is by closing ranks. This is true solidarity: women promoting other women. When a position opens up at the senior level, women need to support one of their own to be chosen for the job. We need to support each other, even if it means we have to wait in line longer for our own turn.

There is so much we can accomplish if we stand together and close ranks.

System-Level Support

Building a business infrastructure and a society that support our ambition and allow us a less arduous path to success takes time — but it will happen. It will happen because we will refuse to allow circumstances to remain the same. Our relentless networking and political savvy will open doors. Our support for each other will create networks, mentors and active sponsors. Our collaborative leadership style and emotional intelligence will make us more relevant in a networked world. Our growing confidence will compensate for the double standards and double binds that keep us in supporting roles. Our time in the leadership pipeline will offer us experience and access to important and visible assignments. We will rise to senior leadership levels.

Helen Mets-Morris, vice president and general manager at Avery Dennison, put it this way: "Breaking through is a huge cultural challenge. But I am so much more effective now that I'm aware of the size of the challenge. In terms of motivation, I believe that every one of us who is working for change is making a difference."

Concluding Words on Change

There is a mountain of research that explains the biological and psychological reasons why people avoid change and stay stuck in bad situations. In their book, *Leadership on the Lie*, Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky say that "habits, values, and attitudes, even dysfunctional ones, are part of one's identity. To change the way people see and do things is to challenge how they define themselves."

Challenging how we define ourselves is a tall order. We've asked you to examine your individual thought patterns and to change the way you think about success. That takes work. But even if you struggle with change, the truth is that once you take the leap, you'll be rewarded. We've found that when the women we work with make even small changes, they feel brave and invigorated. We tell them to remember those feelings — they make change a little bit easier the next time. ●

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Break Your Own Rules*, you'll also like:

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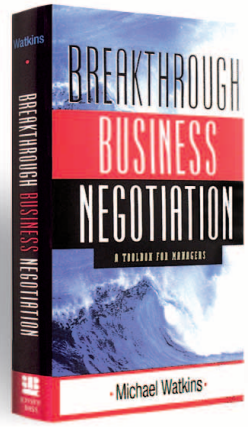
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Breakthrough Business Negotiation

Michael Watkins

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Vol. 25, No. 2 (2 parts) Part 2, February 2003 • Order # 25-05

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By Michael Watkins

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BREAKTHROUGH BUSINESS NEGOTIATION

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Negotiating is much more complicated than making an offer and fielding a counter-offer. It's a complex process that can affect the future of individuals and organizations. A "breakthrough negotiator" must analyze, plan, sell, organize and motivate. The best negotiators are also leaders. They bring together a team of players and guide them in all-out battle against the opposition. Top negotiators don't obtain their skills by accident — they learn from experience and studying the art of negotiating.

In Breakthrough Business Negotiation*, Michael Watkins takes you through the negotiation process, from initial preparation to closing the deal. Watkins, an associate professor of business administration at Harvard Business School, provides step-by-step guidance on winning consistently at the negotiating table.*

What You'll Learn In This Summary

✓ **The key tasks of a negotiator.** Negotiators must diagnose the situation, shape the structure of the proceedings, manage the negotiation process, and assess the results afterward.

✓ **Setting the agenda for negotiations.** It's crucial to have an impact early, when the agenda for what will and won't be negotiated is being set. This establishes boundaries before momentum builds in the wrong direction or irreversible commitments are made.

✓ **How to "frame" the negotiation.** Framing is accomplished by using argument, analogy and metaphor to define the problem to be solved and the set of potential solutions. Skillful framing reaches the target audience by evoking mental images and emotional reactions that influence their behavior.

✓ **Managing the negotiation process.** Managing the process is a major element of breakthrough negotiating. Whoever controls the process can powerfully influence the substance and results of negotiations.

✓ **Building coalitions for success.** To form effective coalitions, you must identify the groups from which you must receive support, then convince them to work on your behalf to help your side win.

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BREAKTHROUGH BUSINESS NEGOTIATION

by Michael Watkins

— THE *COMPLETE* SUMMARY

PART I: FOUNDATIONS OF THE BREAKTHROUGH APPROACH

The Four Key Tasks Of Negotiators

However complicated a negotiation is, it can be understood by breaking it down into its key parts and actions. Every negotiation has a structure: It involves certain people and issues which produce predictable interactions. More complex negotiation systems can be seen as related sets of negotiations.

On face value, these negotiations have nothing in common. But closer examination shows that they all share an underlying structure: All are negotiations that involve more than two parties and no one holds veto power.

Thorough analysis of a situation and its structure is an essential negotiating skill and a hallmark of breakthrough negotiators.

Breakthrough negotiators never treat the structure of a negotiation as preordained or fixed. In other words, the hand can be played as it is dealt, but it can also be changed.

Skilled negotiators can change the structure by inviting additional parties and transforming two-party negotiations into multi-party negotiations. When negotiating stems from clear-eyed analysis, efforts to shape the structure can have a powerful impact on outcomes.

Process Control Is a Source of Power

Control of process is a potent source of power, one that lets you steer the proceedings toward the outcomes you want. This calls for early attention to designing the process and influencing the agenda well before others even realize the game has begun.

Skilled negotiators understand the importance of framing arguments and approaching people at the right time to win their support.

Great leaders are often great negotiators, and the reverse can also be true. Individual negotiators can make all the difference in the outcome of complex negotiations. This is true when a chief executive officer decides to acquire another company or world leaders negotiate a new international trade regime.

The negotiator has to manage negotiations with the opposition, discussions among his or her own team, and interactions between the two. The best negotiators are never passive go-betweens. They shape the perceptions of those they represent and the perceptions of their counterparts across the table.

These are four tasks negotiators embark on at and away from the table:

- **Diagnosing the situation.** Systematically assess the components of the negotiation and identify potential barriers to agreement.
- **Shaping the structure.** Influence who participates, what the issues are, and what the alternatives are, so you don't end up playing someone else's game.
- **Managing the process.** Prepare for and conduct face-to-face interactions to build momentum.
- **Assessing the results.** Set goals and periodically evaluate how you're doing to adjust your plans and manage the process. ■

Diagnosing the Situation

The first step in preparing to negotiate from strength is to diagnose the particulars of the situation thoroughly. This means taking a hard-headed look at the seven key structural elements of any negotiation: parties, rules, issues, interests, alternatives, agreements and linkages.

Parties

The parties who are participating in the negotiation

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For Additional Information on the author, go to: http://my.summary.com

Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries (ISSN 0747-2196), P.O. Box 1053, Concordville, PA 19331 USA, a division of Concentrated Knowledge Corporation. Published monthly. Subscriptions: $195 per year in U.S., Canada & Mexico, and $275 to all other countries. Periodicals postage paid at Concordville, PA and additional offices.

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Diagnosing the Situation

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may seem evident. Sometimes, however, other parties are already involved, or may become involved. Or you may want to bring in other parties yourself. When diagnosing a negotiation, make sure you identify all the players and potential players. Also look for existing and potential coalitions — allies of the parties who may influence the negotiation.

Rules

What are the rules of the game? All negotiations are influenced by formal or informal rules. These include laws and regulations, social conventions and professional codes of conduct.

Issues

Don't take the agenda — the set of issues that the parties decide to negotiate — for granted. Remember that the agenda itself is subject to negotiation. When diagnosing a negotiation be sure to: identify the full set of issues (including issues that are beneath the surface); unbundle the issues (different issues often get intertwined when they should actually be negotiated separately); determine whether relationships are an issue (there's a world of difference between negotiating a deal and negotiating a dispute); and identify and deal with toxic issues.

Interests

What are the goals that you and others are pursuing? You can create value in the negotiations for everyone if you: seek out shared interests, propose mutually beneficial trades, and secure insecure contracts. This latter step is important. If the parties don't completely trust each other, they must find ways to minimize their vulnerability so that the negotiation is not impeded.

Alternatives

What if you can't reach an agreement? Then look for what is known in negotiation as your BATNA (best alternative to a negotiated agreement). A BATNA needs to be built. For example, if before you start to negotiate for a promotion you've secured an offer from another employer, that offer is a strong BATNA. Developing a BATNA is also key in identifying your walk-away position.

Agreements

Are there agreements that would benefit both sides? You won't know for sure until you start the negotiations, but at this stage you should at least try to discern the bargaining range for both parties. The bargaining range depends on the walk-aways. If you refuse to accept less than a 3 percent raise, and your boss refuses to give you more than 5 percent, then the bargaining range is between a 3 percent and a 5 percent raise. However, if you refuse to accept less than 5 percent, and your boss refuses to give you more than 3 percent, then there is no bargaining range, and no possibility of agreement.

Keep in mind that not all negotiations are win-lose. The parties may be able to create value. Find ways through mutually beneficial trades to enlarge the pie for everyone.

Linkages

The issue here is to decide whether your current negotiations are linked to other negotiations. Stand-alone negotiations are surprisingly rare. Even the relatively simple negotiation for a raise may involve other negotiations. For example, you may be negotiating for jobs in other companies. Your boss may be negotiating with other employees in other departments who also want a pay hike. These other negotiations will impact the resolution of your negotiation for a raise.

Identifying Barriers and Opportunities

Once you have thoroughly diagnosed the situation, you will be able to put together a table that identifies the barriers and the opportunities with each element. Armed with this information, you are in a much better position to start the negotiation. ■

The Different Types of Linkages

There are different types of linkages involved in the current negotiation you are focusing on and other negotiations. Sequential linkages, for example, occur when an earlier negotiation affects a later one. For example, your boss may have negotiated a deal with bankers with cost-cutting as one of the terms. In that case, your boss is less able to meet your terms for a raise. The simultaneous negotiations with your boss and a potential employer are examples of competitive linkages.

Shaping the Structure

A potent way to shape the game is to influence who plays. One method of doing this is to invite other players into the negotiation. Another way is to try to exclude parties. And sometimes it is advantageous to try to prevent parties from participating or to remove them from the game. There are questions to ask about shaping the structure:

- Would it make sense to bring in a mediator?
- Are there parties involved that you might be able to

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Shaping the Structure

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exclude?

● If there are too many parties, can you convince some to allow themselves to be represented by others?

Setting the Agenda

It is crucial to have an impact early, when the agenda for what will and won't be negotiated is being set. This establishes boundaries before momentum builds in the wrong direction, or irreversible commitments are made, or too much time passes. Breakthrough negotiators don't view the agenda as fixed, but as something that can be shaped.

Skilled negotiators discuss the agenda early on, trying to define nonnegotiable issues and set preconditions before negotiating the main points.

Setting the agenda sometimes involves postponing "toxic" issues or removing them from consideration.

Framing and Reframing

Framing is using argument, analogy and metaphor to define the problem to be solved and the set of potential solutions. Skillful framing reaches the target audience by evoking mental images and emotional reactions that influence their behavior. Efforts to frame (or reframe) often involve coordinated actions at the negotiating table (by means of argument) and away from the table (through use of the media).

Negotiators often compete in a "frame game" in which they try to define the dominant frame for the negotiation.

Framing tactics work because people's thoughts on what is at stake tend to form clearly only when they are forced to make choices. Reframing is necessary when the existing frame has become a barrier to agreement. It can also give your counterparts ways to back away gracefully from poorly chosen positions.

Controlling Information

Power comes to those who control other parties' access to information. Information-control techniques are especially potent when you have private access to valuable information and when negotiations involve multiple parties and shared decision-making.

Information control relies on several techniques:

● **Sharing information selectively.** Privately held information can be used as a tool to shape the beliefs and attitudes of other parties. This type of information control involves withholding information, releasing information at predetermined times, and communicating information to selected audiences.

● **Influencing patterns of communication.** Another form of information control involves encouraging or discouraging communication among other parties in the negotiation. Meeting with potential allies can help build a coalition. ■

Managing the Process

Managing the process is the third major element of the breakthrough negotiation framework. Whoever controls the process can powerfully influence the substance and results of negotiations.

Negotiators are often driven by inner psychological needs or motivations. When assessing your counterparts' motivations (and your own), you should think about these needs in terms of which are dominant and how they will affect your efforts to manage the process:

● **Maintaining control.** To feel competent, do your counterparts need to feel in control of the process and not controlled by others?

● **Exercising power.** Do they need to dominate their counterparts, and perhaps show others that they are doing so?

● **Preserving reputation.** Are they preoccupied with maintaining a reputation as effective or tough negotiators?

● **Being consistent.** Do they care about staying consistent with prior commitments or statements of principle?

● **Maintaining relationships.** Do they care about preserving relationships and being liked?

Negotiators approach the table with outcomes in mind. These outcomes typically take two forms: "red lines" that cannot be crossed without creating psychological havoc, and results that would achieve their goals.

The opponent's commitment to its goals matters, too. Negotiators who set their sights high tend to do better than those with lower aspirations. But unrealistic expectations can be a barrier to agreement.

Emotions, real and feigned, enter into most negotiations. A timely display of anger, for example, can demonstrate resolve as long as it is employed infrequently. By the same token, escalating disagreements and the emotions they provoke can prevent productive interaction.

Planning Strategy

The goal of examining the negotiation process at these three different stages of resolution is to equip you to manage at-the-table interactions more productively. If agreement is your objective, the basic goals at the table are twofold: to learn about your counterpart's interests, alternatives and bottom lines; and to shape your counterpart's perceptions of what is attainable.

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Managing the Process

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Shaping Perceptions

The arsenal that negotiators use to shape their counterparts' perceptions at the table includes the following classic persuasion techniques:

- **Anchoring.** Your initial stance strongly influences the other side's perception of the bargaining range. An offer that is high (or low) but not so extreme that it triggers dismissal of the offer can give your counterparts a favorable first impression.
- **Threats.** Threats are promises to do harm that are used to shape others' perceptions of what will happen if no agreement is reached. Threats have to be credible to be effective. Even if credible, they can cause irrational resistance.
- **Warnings.** Warnings are milder than threats and less likely to trigger resistance. Instead of saying, "If you do that, I will punish you," a warning says, "If you do that, bad things (not caused by me) will happen to you."
- **Commitments.** Commitments are self-imposed costs. Negotiators commit to a course of action (perhaps by putting their reputations at stake) to convince their counterparts that they have no other option. Over-committed negotiators stand firm long after it is clear that their objectives are unachievable.
- **Action-forcing events.** Deadlines, meetings and other key events can be established to move the process forward.

Allowing the River to Flow

Managing the flow of negotiations is like influencing the flow of a river. You can try to advance your interests by restricting the flow in places, releasing it in others, and channeling it in desired directions. The flow toward agreement can be dammed by creating impasses on purpose; tensions can be released by proposing a new solution or face-saving compromise. In the process, the patient, creative negotiator might be able to create and claim substantial value. ■

Assessing the Results

Once a negotiation is under way, you should step back periodically to evaluate how it is going. A natural point to step back is between negotiating sessions, but it can (and should) also be done in the heat of battle. Part of appraising an ongoing negotiation is deciding whether you are meeting the specific goals you set for yourself.

This article lists a sample of the questions that you should ask yourself as you step back to assess your efforts.

Questions About Diagnosing the Situation

- **Do you have a clear view of the situation?** A clear view of the situation is the bedrock on which you build your strategies and tactics. If your take on the situation is flawed or incomplete, you are likely to be blindsided or to underperform.
- **Have you been efficient and effective in your learning?** The more thoroughly you diagnose a negotiating situation, the more prepared you will be. But trade-offs are unavoidable, and you'll have to deal with limits in resources and information.

Questions About Shaping the Structure

- **Are you involved with the right people?** An excellent agreement with the wrong people can be less valuable than a good agreement with the right people. Are you dealing with people who can offer you the best opportunities to create and claim value?
- **Are you shaping the issue agenda?** Focusing on the right set of issues enhances your ability to create value and claim it. Ask yourself now and then if there are issues you could add to the agenda that would expand your opportunities.
- **Are you winning the frame game?** Your goal in framing is to persuade your counterparts to accept your definition of "the problem" and "the options." In other words, you must find a way to give the situation face value and credibility with the target audience. Have you accomplished this?

Questions About Managing the Process

- **Are you moving the process through the right phases?** You must discipline yourself to step back and ask: Have I reached agreement with the other side about how the process should be restructured? Are the phases I'd like to go through likely to build momentum?
- **Are you crafting sustainable agreements?** You can negotiate with the right people and do a good job of creating and claiming value and still fail. Crafting sustainable agreements means anticipating and dealing with unforeseen changes.
- **Are you upholding your ethical standards?** "Negotiation ethics" might strike some people as a contradiction in terms. But negotiators have to live with the consequences of their actions, and failure to adhere to your core beliefs is destructive. Step back occasionally and make sure you are not sacrificing your standards in the heat of battle.
- **Are you learning, both individually and organizationally?** Every negotiation is an opportunity to learn. But learning only happens if you invest in capturing the lessons of experience. Ask yourself, "What went well?" and "What should I do differently next time?" ■

PART II: BUILDING THE BREAKTHROUGH TOOLBOX

Now that you are familiar with the foundations of the breakthrough approach, you are ready to augment your toolbox and try putting it to use. The following articles present strategies and tactics for dealing with common challenges that confront real-world negotiators. ■

Overcoming Power Imbalances

The following principles provide ways that smaller players can shape the structure and manage the process when facing an opponent of greater size or power.

● **Principle 1: Never do all-or-nothing deals.** The biggest mistake a small player can make is to enter into a single make-or-break negotiation with a larger partner. Doing so just reinforces the larger party's perception of its own strength and inevitably leads to poor deals.

This is why it is essential for weaker players to shape the structure so that everything is not riding on a single negotiation. A primary objective is to diversify partner risk so that the larger party cannot exert monopoly power over you.

● **Principal 2: Make them smaller.** Do not treat a larger partner as a single unified entity. The notion of big-company-as-powerful-monolith fails to recognize that large companies are made up of smaller units led by people with their own incentives and interests. This is increasingly true given large companies' tendency to decentralize responsibility and accountability.

The smaller player should negotiate with part of the larger organization rather than the whole thing. This means finding individuals and units within the larger company that are interested in what you have to offer.

● **Principle 3: Make yourself bigger.** There is strength in numbers. A smaller player dealing with a larger one should build coalitions to fortify its bargaining power. An effective coalition can be built with one or a few large players or many smaller players. It is essential to diagnose the situation carefully, identify promising allies, and build alliances with them. The larger player must see that you, in conjunction with your allies, are a force to be reckoned with.

● **Principal 4: Build momentum through a sequence of deals.** Negotiating the right deals early makes it easier to negotiate subsequent deals at better terms. But early deals with the wrong partners can make everything that follows an uphill battle.

● **Principal 5: Harness the power of competition.** Spreading the word that you might do a deal with someone else sets the stage for judicious use of competition in negotiating the terms of deals.

● **Principal 6: Constrain yourself.** By entering into binding prior agreements, smaller negotiators can buttress their bargaining power with larger counterparts

● **Principal 7: Hold the informational high ground.** The right information, processed and organized for easy access, is a potent source of strength in negotiations with larger counterparts. Negotiation positions are built on supporting arguments: You have to build a solid foundation of fact to support your position while you attempt to knock supporting pillars out from under the other side. It is essential to be better prepared than the larger player and gain and hold the informational high ground.

● **Principal 8: Take control of the process.** Articulating the reasons that both parties came to the table in the first place establishes a sense of momentum. Flesh out the offer thoroughly and work out the basic

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The Death of GO Computer

To illustrate how hard it can be to negotiate with larger parties, consider the untimely death of GO Computer. GO was founded to develop a small computer that would be operated by stylus rather than a keyboard, an early personal assistant. CEO Jerry Kaplan assembled a team of software and hardware developers who quickly put together an impressive functional prototype. The prototype attracted interest from State Farm Insurance for an auto claims estimating application.

State Farm insisted that GO team up with one of its conventional computer suppliers, IBM or Hewlett Packard (HP). Kaplan picked IBM and decided to negotiate an alliance. The result was a year-long nightmare in which Kaplan was passed from person to person in IBM while GO's cash burned. The deal that was ultimately signed placed burdensome oversight restrictions on GO and held its intellectual property hostage to performance. It became evident that some people within IBM viewed GO as a potential competitor. Persistent problems in the relationship ultimately contributed to GO's bankruptcy.

GO management did not understand how to leverage its core technology to negotiate deals with multiple potential partners, leading to overreliance on a single partner. Its choice of partner was unfortunate: HP had been anxious to work with GO, but IBM didn't really need the start-up and was in no hurry to do the deal. IBM could afford to wait while GO depleted its resources and then impose very unattractive terms. Kaplan never found an internal champion or identified a group within IBM that had a lot to gain by working with GO.

Overcoming Power Imbalances

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structure of the deal before raising the subject of money.

● **Principal 9: Negotiate with implementation in mind.** Try not to burn your bridges, and try to preserve the strength of your alternatives in case serious problems arise during implementation.

● **Principle 10: Build superior organizational capabilities.** It is essential to forge relationships with skilled external advisers, such as lawyers and investment bankers.

These are the conditions needed for success, but they are not sufficient in and of themselves. You must be organized to learn rapidly as you do more deals with large players. Fast learning is a valuable advantage for small players: If you can learn from past negotiations, capture the resulting insights, and share those insights among yourselves, you will increase your negotiating effectiveness. ■

Building Coalitions

In building effective coalitions, the first step is to identify the groups from which you must receive support. Such groups typically include:

● Organizational units of employees bound together by shared training and expertise or by shared tasks and supervision.

● Identity groups bound by occupation, age, gender, race or social class that protect shared interests and promote mutual solidarity.

● Power coalitions of people who have banded together to advance or protect shared interests, but who might not otherwise interact with each other.

Identifying Supporters, Opponents And 'Persuadables'

Some people will endorse the leader's agenda right away because it advances their own interests. But enlisting people as supporters does not mean you can take them for granted. It is never enough simply to elicit support: You have to maintain it.

People facing tough decisions can become tense as opposing forces push them in conflicting directions. The source of tension might be internal conflicts or social pressures, such as other stressful commitments or worry about what respected people will think. Ultimately, a person decides that the benefits of supporting one path outweigh the costs of renouncing others.

You can deepen your analysis by assessing the driving and restraining forces at work on people you may influence. Driving forces push people in the direction you desire; restraining forces push them elsewhere. The goal is to strengthen the driving forces or weaken the restraining forces, or both.

Using Social Influence

People rarely make important choices independently; most are influenced by colleagues, friends and key advisers. If a highly respected person already supports an initiative, others are more likely to support it, too. Convincing opinion leaders to lend support and mobilize their own networks has a powerful leveraging effect.

If important people cannot be convinced to support your position, it might be necessary to engage them in a "this-for-that" negotiation in which you agree to support initiatives they care about in exchange for their support of yours. To succeed, you must understand the full set of interests at stake — which might include reputation and prestige as well as tangible needs — and craft a suitable trade.

> ***If important people cannot be convinced to support your position, it might be necessary to engage them in a "this-for-that" negotiation.***

Matching the Medium to the Message

Decisions about how to communicate a message should not be made lightly. Leaders have at their disposal a variety of forums and media, including speeches, small-group meetings, town meetings, newsletters, memos, interactive videoconferences, videotapes and Web pages. News is nearly always best delivered in an interactive forum, such as a meeting at which people can ask questions, but complex technical and data-intensive arguments are best conveyed in written form. ■

Managing Conflict

The starting point for managing conflict is understanding the difference between a simple dispute and a self-sustaining conflict system.

The Phases of a Simple Dispute

Simple disputes move through these distinct phases:

Escalation. Escalation is a vicious cycle of provocation, reprisal and counter-reprisal that ratchets up hostility between the parties. This scenario typically begins with a provocative action by one party that leaves the other party feeling insulted or injured. The injured party's response is likely to be disproportionate, causing more damage than the triggering action.

De-Escalation. Few disputes escalate completely out of control. Instead, something usually happens that promotes de-escalation. In some instances, the parties take another look at the situation and back away from further provocative actions; in other cases, interested outside

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Managing Conflict

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parties intervene to settle the conflict.

Stalemate and Settlement. The parties may reach a stalemate and realize that no one can win by using contentious tactics. This situation can force them to the negotiating table in pursuit of a settlement.

But some conflicts do not get resolved. Once sparked, they evolve into bitter, ongoing battles among parties who have no choice but to continue to interact. This happens when some or all of the parties take actions that cause irreversible hostility. In such situations, the goal is conflict management, not dispute resolution.

Third-Party Intervention

Third-party intervenors can play constructive roles in disputes and sustained conflicts. To understand the roles intervenors play, it is important to learn why third parties intervene in conflicts and identify the sources of their power. Outside parties often intervene in conflicts because they are invited in, but even seemingly impartial mediators might be pursuing personal or institutional goals, such as enhanced reputation. Other intervenors enter such situations because a conflict threatens their vital interests.

> ***Even seemingly impartial mediators might be pursuing personal or institutional goals, such as enhanced reputation.***

Momentum-Building Processes

When your goal is to build momentum by rescuing a conflict-racked negotiation, the design of the process merits a fresh, objective look. Circumstances determine whether it makes sense to conduct a shuttle or a summit, a multi-phase agreement, or secret back-channel diplomacy.

Shuttles and Summits. Shuttles and summits bring totally different dynamics to building momentum in negotiations, but they are sometimes used at different stages of the same conflict.

For example, if the parties cannot meet because of geographical or political constraints, a shuttle serves as a bridge for effective communication. When the parties still lack a common definition of the problem or do not realize the consequences of not reaching agreement, a shuttle can nudge them toward a common definition of the problem and the options before them.

A summit is a meeting of all parties often conducted in public. Summits give the parties opportunities to learn about their relationships in terms of power and preferences. Concessions made at private meetings are more easily withdrawn than concessions made at a public summit.

Multi-Phase Agreements. Multi-phase agreements follow an important logic: The parties negotiate sets of relatively easy issues first, implement agreement on those, then move on to tougher issues. In one common form of multi-phase agreement, the parties first negotiate the guiding principles for a mutually acceptable settlement. These principles serve as a basis for negotiating more specific agreements and more divisive issues.

Secret Diplomacy. Leaders sometimes choose to craft an agreement using secret or back-channel diplomacy and then present it to their constituencies as a done deal. Secrecy transforms a two-level (internal-external) negotiation into a simpler unified process, delaying internal negotiations and removing opposition.

Secrecy also insulates the parties from media attention so they can forget about public appearances and concentrate on substantive issues. The goal of secret diplomacy is to create and sustain a supportive coalition. ■

Leading Negotiations

When a negotiator represents the interests of others, those who are absent from the table could be principals with decision-making power or constituencies who expect the representative to lead them.

Whatever the scenario is, the negotiator functions as a bridge between internal decision-making and external negotiations. When negotiators shape their demands, have a clear vision of what they want to achieve, and work to shape perceptions internally and externally, they can effectively advance their side's interests — and their own.

Orchestrating Teams

Representation is about negotiating on behalf of others; leading teams is about negotiating in concert with others.

Teams are valuable because they bring together people with varied expertise. The full cast of participants in an acquisition, including external advisors, can be very large. The goal is to identify and obtain interest from attractive potential partners. The trick is to assemble a critical mass of expertise without creating too large a team: The larger the team, the more difficult and expensive it is to coordinate.

To function effectively, a negotiating team needs a clear-cut lead negotiator. You can also assign distinct roles and responsibilities to team members, such as observation of the other side or note-taking. As lead negotiator, you can conserve energy by shifting the burden of talking to another member of your team now and then. ■

For Additional Information: "Using the breakthrough approach in crisis negotiations" go to: http://my.summary.com

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Business Made Simple

Donald Miller

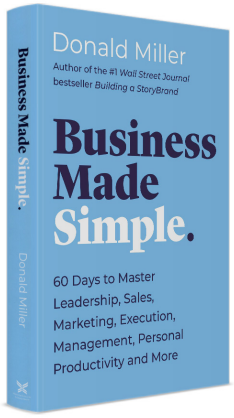
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60 Days to Master Leadership, Sales, Marketing, Execution, Management, Personal Productivity and More

by **Donald Miller**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

New York Times and *Wall Street Journal* best-selling author Donald Miller knows that business is more than just a good idea made profitable; it's a system of unspoken rules, rarely taught by MBA schools. If you are attempting to profitably grow your business or career, you need elite business knowledge—knowledge that creates tangible value.

Business Made Simple offers that knowledge, by teaching what it takes to grow your career and create a company that is healthy and profitable. It covers the key areas in which successful leaders and their businesses excel, such as character, leadership, messaging, management, execution, and more.

Business Made Simple is the must-have guide for anyone who feels lost or overwhelmed by the modern business climate, even if they attended business school. Learn what the most successful business leaders have known for years, through the simple but effective secrets shared in this groundbreaking guide.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The qualities of good character that lead to success.
- The importance of reflection and prioritizing for your productivity.
- To create stories that cast your customer as the hero and you as the guide.
- The difference between management and execution—and strategies for succeeding at both.

Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries® (ISSN 0747-2196), 2 Christy Drive, Suite 302, Chadds Ford, PA 19317 USA. • Copyright ©2021 by Soundview, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited. • Subscriptions start at $99/year. To subscribe, visit summary.com. • Vol. 43, No. 6 (2 parts), Part 2, June 2021 • Order #43-15 • Meghan P. Kozak, Editor-in-Chief • Ashleigh Imus, Senior Editor • Kylie Waytuck, Graphic Designer

Introduction

Whether you work for yourself or work for a company, giving your customers or your boss an incredible return on their investment is the key to building your personal wealth. Each of us has to wake up in the morning and give people a return on the time, energy, and money they entrust to us.

This is the secret to success. How much more valuable would you be on the open market if you actually knew how to make a lot of money for a company?

Because so many of us have no practical, real-life, business education, we find ourselves secretly wondering if we have what it takes to do the job and are worried that any day we are going to be exposed as a fraud.

If you master the lessons introduced here, you will dramatically increase your personal worth on the open market. You will also become deadly at your job. Nobody will beat you.

What is your actual value as a working professional? Do you have the character traits and skill sets of a person who can offer extreme value to an organization? Use the following ideas, sampled and adapted from the book's 60-day framework, to transform your economic worth.

The 10 Characteristics of a Value- Driven Professional

No core competency can overcome bad character. If we don't have good character, we are going to fail in business and in life. And we will never become value-driven professionals.

In the end, even if we can make a company money, we will likely lose them everything we made them if we lack character. For that reason, we are going to start with the character traits we need in order to add value to customers and the people we work with.

What follows are the characteristics that value-driven professionals have in common. The great thing about the 10 characteristics of a value-driven professional is they can be learned.

1. Value-driven professionals see themselves as an economic product on the open market. Most successful people are obsessed with getting people a strong return on the investment made in them.

2. A value-driven professional sees themself as a hero, not a victim. Competent professionals can deal with any sort of challenge—even unfair challenges—and yet still find a way to win.

3. A value-driven professional knows how to de-escalate drama. The better you are at keeping your cool and helping others around you keep their cool, the more respected you will be and the more you will be chosen to move up.

4. A value-driven professional knows feedback is a gift. While it can often be hard to accept feedback, the ability to do so is the sign of maturity and will give you a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

5. A value-driven professional knows the right way to engage in conflict. Positive ambition will always meet resistance. Conflict-avoidant people are rarely chosen to lead.

6. A value-driven professional wants to be trusted and respected more than they want to be liked. What team members want most is clarity.

7. A value-driven professional has a bias toward action. They do not let ideas die on the vine. They take actions to make those ideas happen.

8. A value-driven professional does not choose to be confused. What masquerades as confusion is often our desire to avoid conflict and our un-willingness to take action.

9. A value-driven professional is relentlessly optimistic. The more relentlessly optimistic you are, the more you get to enjoy the rewards that come with trying.

10. A value-driven professional has a growth mindset. Stanford professor Carol Dweck found that people with a growth mindset believed their brains were adaptable and could get smarter. They were more willing to embrace challenges and did not see failure as a condemnation of their identity.

Leadership Made Simple

How to Create a Mission Statement and Guiding Principles

Once you develop the character traits of a value-driven professional, you will be asked to lead. All good leaders are able to cast a vision that excites and unites a team.

Here is leadership in a nutshell: Invite a team into a story, explain why the story matters, and give every team member a role to play in the story.

If you want to be a value-driven professional, learn a daily routine that increases your output without increasing your anxiety.

All human beings long for a mission. We are all born self-identifying as heroes in a story, and we know, even as children, that our existence on this planet matters. A leader who can help a team define a mission and who can remind that team daily of what the mission is and why it matters is a valuable gift to their organization.

Here are the five components that make up a set of guiding principles. This set of guiding principles defines a mission that can be used to unite an entire company or a division.

To unite and motivate a team, learn to write a mission statement that is short, interesting, and memorable. It should explain what you are doing to serve people and why that effort matters. For example, for a software company, "Our software will run on half the computers in America by 2029 because nobody should have to suffer a software interface that confuses them."

Define the key characteristics you'll need to develop in order to accomplish your mission, and you'll transform yourself and your team. Do you need to become faster, more attentive to customers, or better coders? If your mission is to create software that makes managing money easy, a key characteristic should be that your people are students of great software interfaces.

Define three repeatable, critical actions every person in your organization can take that will contribute to your mission. For instance, if one of our critical actions is to "have a stand-up meeting every morning 15 minutes before we open," we will all get to work early and know what our priorities are when the doors open.

Know how to attract people to your mission by telling your story. When you tell your story, people decide whether or not to buy from you, invest in you, or even spread word about what you're doing. In the most simple form of story structure, a story features a character who has been destabilized by an event and then overcomes a series of challenges to restabilize their life.

Define the theme of your mission so you and your people will know why your work is important. The theme is the "why" of you or your organization. For a business, a theme can be anything from "nobody should have to pay too much for a new roof" to "every family deserves a vacation they will never forget."

Productivity Made Simple

Now that we've learned the character of a value-driven professional and how to unite and align a team, it's time to learn how to manage ourselves and our time so we get the most done in the least amount of time and don't burden ourselves with undue stress and anxiety.

If you want to be a value-driven professional, learn a daily routine that increases your output without increasing your anxiety. It's a winning combination. And it's not so hard to learn.

A productive professional starts the day with reflection. Every morning, ask yourself one simple question: "If this were the second time you were living this day, what would you do differently?" Then, we need to live in such a way that we won't have regret. Those who do not reflect neither edit nor design—they simply respond.

A value-driven professional knows how to prioritize their highest return opportunity. What's the most important thing you can do today? The reality is, not every unit of work gets the same return.

A value-driven professional knows how to say "no" to distractions so they can say "yes" to priorities. If we say "yes" to too many things, we are saying "no" to the deep and focused attention it takes to do a few things well.

A value-driven professional knows how to block their time. Bill Gates is never late to a meeting. When asked why, he said, "Because time is the one finite resource I can't buy more of." Time is like the multiple lanes of a freeway. Some lanes really do move faster than others. Blocking periods of time in which you cannot be distracted is the equivalent of getting into the fast lane and pressing the gas pedal.

After your morning ritual of reflection and committing to your highest priorities, continue to block your time for the rest of the day. In one-, two-, and three-hour chunks, you can accomplish a great deal.

Business Strategy Made Simple

How a Business Really Works and How to Keep It from Crashing

Regardless of whether you lead a team or not, your personal value as a professional will rise if you demonstrate a general understanding of how a business works. All businesses share a few important components. If you understand those components, you understand how to make a business healthy and profitable.

Using the analogy of an airplane, let's look at the parts of a business and how they fit together to make a healthy machine capable of lifting off the ground to travel far and fast.

A value-driven professional knows a business works like an airplane. There are five distinct parts that have to work together in order for the plane to fly. Each part will represent an aspect of your business. And each part has to be kept in proportion, or the business will crash.

The body: overhead. This includes salaries, medical benefits, rent, office supplies, and so on. These are necessary expenses because it takes people and supplies to solve customers' problems in exchange for revenue.

The wings: products and services. The wings of the airplane represent everything you sell. Think of the products you sell as the part of the plane that gives the airplane lift. Without profitable products to sell, no air (revenue) can lift the airplane off the ground.

The right engine: marketing. Without some kind of engine selling the products and propelling the plane forward, the wings cannot create lift. Some kind of marketing system or sales team needs to thrust the business forward and sell those products.

The left engine: sales. Your second engine is your sales effort. Your sales team brings in even more money so the business can afford to grow and scale.

Fuel: capital and cash flow. A business may glide a little when it runs out of cash, but eventually it will crash, and everybody onboard the body of the business will lose their livelihoods.

If the parts of an airplane are not in proportion to each other, the airplane will crash. Here are some things smart business leaders keep in mind as they run a company or a division of a company:

- They are resistant to adding costs (especially recurring costs) to overhead.
- They get daily or weekly reports that reveal whether marketing and sales efforts are performing effectively.
- They make sure the profit margins on the products they create are high enough to cover the overhead necessary to sell them.
- They are constantly increasing the efficiency of their production, sales, and marketing.

Messaging Made Simple

How (and Why) to Clarify Your Marketing Message

All of those projects we are working on won't go anywhere unless we can explain their importance to customers in a marketing message that attracts buyers. If you can clearly explain what sort of better life people get when they buy your product, you will sell more products.

When clarifying your message, use the power of story. The only tool that can stop people from daydreaming is story. When we start to hear a story, we stop daydreaming and pay attention. Story is that powerful.

Consider the following formula:

- A character that wants something.
- The character encounters a problem.
- The character meets the guide.
- The guide gives the hero a plan.
- The guide calls the hero to action.
- Define the stakes—success.
- Define the stakes—failure.

When clarifying your marketing message, never position yourself as the hero. Always position yourself as the guide. In stories, heroes are weak characters becoming strong. There is another character in most stories, though, who is already strong. The guide exists in the story to help the hero win. For this reason, whenever

we clarify our message, we want to position ourselves as the guide, not the hero.

When clarifying your marketing message, know the problem is the hook. Until the storyteller introduces the challenge the main character is up against, the audience sits wondering what the story is about.

When clarifying your marketing message, define what action you want your audience to take. In a good story, the guide must confidently ask the hero to take action or the hero will lose confidence and fail. Why? Because when the guide fails to confidently ask people to take action, the listener begins to doubt the guide's competence. Can you or can't you get the hero out of this predicament?

When clarifying your message, be sure to define what's at stake. What will people's lives look like if they engage the story you're inviting them into? What will people's lives look like if they don't engage in the story you're inviting them into?

A sales funnel earns trust and familiarity with customers, and it allows you to reach out to them and pivot your message.

Marketing Made Simple

How to Create a Sales Funnel That Converts Potential Customers into Buyers

Marketing isn't just about delivering messages to customers; it's also about delivering messages to co-workers, stakeholders, and even the press or media. A sales funnel is one of the simplest, most inexpensive, and yet effective marketing strategies you can implement. It's the foundation of any good marketing plan.

A sales funnel earns trust and familiarity with customers, and it allows you to reach out to them and pivot your message.

A great marketer knows how to build a sales funnel. All sales are relational. People hear commercial messages about products and services all the time, but they mostly discard the information. That is, unless they hear about products and services from people or brands they trust. All relationships move through three stages: curiosity, enlightenment, and commitment. We must slowly, over time, pique our customer's curiosity, enlighten them about our product, and then ask them for a commitment.

A great marketer knows how to craft a one-liner. The first step to creating a relationship with a customer is to pique their curiosity. But how can we do that in one, simple sentence? A Marketing Made Simple one-liner has three components: a problem, your product as a solution, and the result.

A great marketer knows how to wire-frame a website that passes the grunt test. Most people do not read websites, they scan them. In order for a person to stop scanning a website and start reading it—to move from curiosity to a desire for enlightenment—you must further pique their curiosity by clearly communicating the answer to three critical questions: What do you offer? How will it make their life better? What do they need to do to buy it?

A great marketer captures email addresses by offering free value. Once you pique your customers' curiosity with your one-liner and your website, you can begin to enlighten them using a lead generator. The key is to offer tangible, free value in exchange for a potential customer's contact information.

A great marketer builds relationships and closes the sale with an email campaign. After offering a lead generator, craft as many valuable emails as you can, and stay in touch with your customers. Offer recipes, study guides, DIY tips, perspectives on ideas, whatever you think will serve your customers' concerns and interests. When you stay in touch with your customers by sending them valuable emails, they trust you. And when they trust you, they commit and place orders.

Communication Made Simple

How to Become an Exceptional Communicator

Whether you're leading a meeting, launching an initiative, giving a keynote address, or even hosting a webinar, any professional who can keep a room's attention while giving a speech is going to be given more responsibility and more pay. A good communicator is going to be chosen to lead.

When we apply the elements of a good story to a presentation, we get the same result the writers of blockbuster movies get: an engaged and inspired audience.

Consider these five questions:

- What problem are you going to help the audience solve? An audience will not be interested in your presentation until they know you are going to do one thing: Help them solve a problem.
- What is your solution to the problem?
- What will their life look like if they take you up on your solution? A great communicator tells the audience what their lives could look like by foreshadowing a climactic scene. A good story is always headed somewhere, and usually that somewhere has been foreshadowed early enough in the story that the audience knows exactly what they want to happen.
- What do you want the audience to do next? A great communicator includes a strong call to action in their presentation. The main reason you want to include a call to action is because, in general, people do not take action unless they are challenged to take action. In stories, heroes must be forced to take action by some kind of inciting incident. Their dog has been kidnapped, or their husband has been turned into a werewolf!
- What do you want the audience to remember? When you realize the theme of your presentation, make it your last line. You want your theme to be the idea your audience walks away remembering forever.

Sales Made Simple

Regardless of whether you run the company or mow the lawn, every professional dramatically increases their value to an organization if they understand how to sell.

Selling is really about clearly explaining to a person how your product or service can solve their problem and then guiding them through a process that leads them to make a purchase.

A good salesperson works within a framework that invites a customer into a story in which they solve a problem and feel good about themselves in the process. A good salesperson makes the customer the hero and helps the hero win the day.

Cast the right characters. Qualify the lead. When selling, you are inviting a character into a story in which their problem gets solved and they are transformed into a better, more fully equipped version of themselves. This means, however, that not every character is right for the part.

In sales, this is called qualifying the lead. Does the customer have the problem the product solves? Can the customer afford to buy the solution? Does the customer have the authority to buy the product?

Introduce your qualified leads to the story arc your product or service makes possible. In order for your qualified leads to get interested in stepping into that story, you simply need to lay the story out for them. To create a custom story arc for every one of your clients, you will want to use this formula:

- "I see you are struggling with X problem."
- "I see that X problem is causing Y frustration."
- "Our product or service resolves Y frustration by resolving X problem."
- "We've worked with hundreds of clients with X problems, and here are their results."
- "Let's create a step-by-step plan so your problem and frustration get resolved."

Play the guide and know your lines. What does a guide do? Well, as it relates to selling, a guide does three things: reminds the hero what the story is about; gives the hero a plan to resolve their problem and win the day; foreshadows the climactic scene of the story. The key to inviting customers into a story is to figure out the talking points that define the story and then repeat them in lunch meetings, emails, proposals, phone calls, and more.

Negotiation Made Simple

Anytime you find yourself in strategic communication in order to win a deal or resolve a problem, you are in a negotiation. A good negotiator can make or save a company millions each year. Therefore, any team member who understands a negotiation framework dramatically increases their value inside an organization.

A good negotiator understands the two different kinds of negotiations, collaborative and competitive. A win/lose mode of negotiation is called competitive while a win/win mode is called collaborative. A general rule about negotiation is that if one party is competitive and the other party is collaborative, the competitive negotiation technique is going to win and the collaborative will lose. Nearly always.

We trust professional leaders for two reasons: They knowwhat they are doing and can help the team win, and they care about each individual on the team.

If you are in a collaborative negotiation mode and you sense the person you are negotiating with is in a competitive mode, you should switch to competitive immediately. Why? Because they are not looking for a win/win, and in order to create a win/win scenario, you need for them to join you.

A good negotiator goes below the line. Not all negotiations are rational. Human beings are complex, and often emotional issues come into play during a negotiation. People are motivated by many things, not just money. As you negotiate, ask yourself what other factors could be in play. Does the seller want the car to go to somebody who will love it and take care of it the way she did? If you're the buyer who will take good care of that car, make sure to spell out how you're going to continue the tradition.

A good negotiator anchors the negotiation with the initial offer. Anchoring the negotiation means that you've placed a number on the table that you want the rest of the negation to gravitate around. When you are able to make the opening offer, you, from that point on, set the gravitational anchor for the rest of the conversation. This is a strategic advantage.

A good negotiator diversifies their interests to avoid being emotionally hooked. We've all been in negotiations where we find ourselves wanting whatever it is we are negotiating for a little too much. This is a bad place to be in a negotiation. But what do we do when we are overcome with emotion? One good tactic is to find another alternative and split our interests so that we aren't so easily carried away.

Management Made Simple

Let's add even more value by talking about something most of us have to do every day: manage people. Management is all about helping other people win so the overall team can win.

We trust professional leaders for two reasons: They know what they are doing and can help the team win, and they care about each individual on the team.

A great manager establishes clear priorities. By deciding what your priorities are, you are defining for yourself and every member of your team a focus. Nobody can read their manager's mind. The manager must tell the team, nearly every day, what their focus should be.

Identify the key performance indicators you will measure. Once we define what our department produces, we must measure the factors that lead to the production of that output. By deciding what to measure, we tell ourselves and the members of our teams what specific routine tasks are important. In the end, knowing what specific, repeatable tasks a team member is responsible for adds to clarity—and remember, clarity from a manager leads to trust and respect.

Create processes that increase the activity-to-output ratio. The difference between a value-driven professional and an average team member is that the value-driven professional is going to think creatively about improving the performance of the machine. But how do you make the machine that is your department more efficient? Simply ask the question, "How could we make this better?"

Give valuable feedback early and often. A good manager knows that their people are their most valuable asset, and while they work to create a better and better machine, they treat the people who build that machine with great care. The proper care of people, in a professional setting, involves letting them know how they are doing as members of the team. And this involves praise and constructive feedback. The key to giving good feedback is to always, always be *for* the team member you are instructing.

Execution Made Simple

Without an execution system, team members work in a fog. A value-driven professional who can instill and manage an execution system lifts the fog and brings the light.

If Management Made Simple is the design of a process that creates the profitable output of products and services, Execution Made Simple is how you manage the repeatable (and relational) exchanges involved in those processes.

Here are the steps to the Execution Made Simple framework:

Hold a launch meeting to launch a project or initiative. Do not trust your gut or your instincts as to how to accomplish the tasks. Instead, follow a careful checklist along with a few routine processes to ensure the project gets done and gets done on time. The first thing you want to do at your launch meeting is to fill out a "project scope" worksheet. This will guide you to set a clear view of success, assign the leaders, identify resources needed, and create a timeline with key milestones.

Have each team member fill out a "one-pager." No matter how successful your initial meeting went, the fog of fuzzy priorities will come for you and your team, and its one goal is to keep you from getting the job done. A one-pager is intentionally simple. You and your team members will simply review the "clear view of success" determined during the launch meeting, then list the top five priorities for each department and the top five personal priorities for each individual.

Hold weekly "speed checks." Think of a speed check as not unlike a huddle in a football game. This is not a strategy session. This is a quick meeting to make sure everybody on the team knows the play and their specific role in the play. Answer the questions, "What has each team member gotten done?" "What is each team member going to do next?" and "What's blocking any team members from making progress?"

Keep score and measure your success. There is nothing you can do to boost morale and energize a team more than to have everybody on that team understand the rules of the game, feel that they are being coached to victory, and have proof of their progress on a public scoreboard. For example, how many sales calls was each person on the sales team expected to make this week and how did they do?

Celebrate your team's victories. Celebrating an individual's win is how you let them know they've changed, that they've become more competent and capable. Celebrating wins is a critical and necessary routine if we want to develop our people. Notice them, memorialize them, and acknowledge those responsible.

You've now learned some of the very basics that it takes to become a value-driven professional. If you want to become an even better value-driven professional, start the process over and do it all again. The more you affirm what you've learned, the more economic value you will have on the open market.

You are what the market has been awaiting for a long time. Now let's put this knowledge to work solving the world's problems.

IF YOU LIKED THIS SUMMARY, YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE:

- ***What Got You Here Won't Get You There: How Successful People Become Even More Successful*** by Marshall Goldsmith
- ***48 Days To the Work You Love: Preparing for the New Normal*** by Dan Miller



Donald Miller has helped more than 50,000 businesses clarify their marketing messages so their companies grow. He's the CEO of Business Made Simple, the host of the Business Made Simple podcast, and the author of several books, including the best-sellers ***Building a StoryBrand*** and ***Marketing Made Simple***.

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Confessions of the Accidental Career Coach

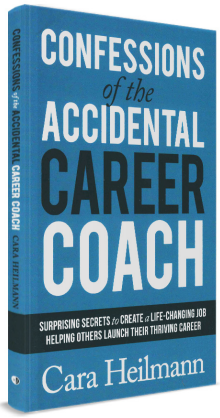
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Confessions of the Accidental Career Coach

Surprising Secrets to Create a Life-Changing Job Helping Others Become Who They Are Meant to Be



by **Cara Heilmann**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Do you have what it takes to be a career coach? Do you have a burning desire to help others find their dream jobs? Does helping others become who they're meant to be sound like your dream job?

In ***Confessions Of The Accidental Career Coach***, successful coach Cara Heilmann pulls back the curtain, revealing what it really takes to succeed. Many would-be career coaches never get off the ground because they lack a practical understanding of what it means to help other people find their true path.

Launching a successful business as a career coach requires a firm understanding of the principles laid out within this book.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The two essential components—or layers—of any coaching business.
- How to help your clients optimize their application process to increase the odds they'll land their dream job.
- How to help your clients make the most of an offer.
- How to onboard new clients, avoid trouble clients and optimize your odds of landing the sale.

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The Coaching Business

There's been a major shift in the way we see coaches as a society. These days, having a coach isn't something a person has to hide. Consider this: we have personal trainers who help us improve our athletic and mental skills. We have music teachers who help us learn an instrument. Indeed, many companies now hire career coaches to help their own employees find other jobs within the company.

Many Types of Coaches

Life coaches work with their clients to help them in all areas of their lives. Meanwhile, business coaches work with clients to help them grow their businesses. Executive coaches, on the other hand, work with clients to enhance and develop leadership and management skills. Spiritual coaches work with clients to identify a spiritual direction.

The bottom line for the budding career coach is that there's never been a better time to hang your shingle.

The Layers of the Career Coaching Business

In order to be a successful career coach, you'll have to master two different skill sets. This is like two layers of a cake.

The first is the art of helping your client transition to their dream career. To achieve this with finesse, you'll need to learn how to prep clients for interviews. In addition, you'll help them polish their resume and other essential documents—these documents are collectively known as their dossier. You'll also teach them how to handle calls like a pro, negotiate with prospective employers and much more.

The second layer is the management of your new business.

Running Your Business

To successfully run your career coaching business, you'll need to know which type of business to form, how to set up your website, what to name yourself and how to market yourself. These technical aspects of running a business can seem quite overwhelming at first. It's best to consider each element one at a time before taking action so you have a clear understanding of the overall process.

Helping Your Clients Achieve Their Dreams

In order for your client to find their dream job, they'll need a stellar résumé, a great cover letter, a strong online profile and adequate networking. Collectively, these documents and assets make up your client's dossier. Often, a job seeker will hop on a call without these documents at the ready. This can put them at a severe disadvantage.

The Résumé

The résumé is the most important part of the dossier. While there is a bit of science in the form of solid writing skills, most of it is an art. The way the words lay on the page is just as important as the words themselves. In fact, the design is half the résumé because résumé expectations are driven by the norms of the industry.

Handling a Call from a Recruiter

Time kills all deals. Your client's number one task when job hunting is to pick up the phone every single time it rings. It doesn't matter what they are doing or where they are. It is imperative that the client pick up the phone. Recruiters want to fill positions quickly because there's a lot that can go wrong. By the time a recruiter is ready to screen candidates, they'll have a stack of ten that look promising. After they go through the résumés, they'll probably talk to four of the ten. It's likely they'll only like two of these.

It is crucial, therefore, that your client makes themselves available to take calls during business hours.

Note that if the recruiter puts the salary question early on in the conversation, they're seeing if they can afford the candidate. Your client should not avoid this question or attempt to dodge it as recruiters find this extremely irritating.

If your client is below the market, did their organization not provide raises? Was it a start-up? If they're above the market, was it a company in a really tough industry? Is it an unpopular industry? You'll need to know the answer before your client is ready to take calls from recruiters.

Finally, recruiters expect to be asked a few questions during the call. For this reason, encourage your client to come up with 10 questions of their own. Asking questions at the appropriate place in the call will convey your client's curiosity and enthusiasm.

The All Important Offer

The onsite interview is where the rubber meets the road. This is where your client puts on their very best performance. Once they've aced the interview, ask your client to write a thank you email, but have them send it to you first. Are they reaching out to the hiring manager or recruiter with a sense

of thanksgiving and gratitude, or from a place of scarcity? Are they expressing gratitude, or are they trying to sell?

Even if you feel your client is close to receiving an offer, remember that deals fall through quite easily. It's best to help your client fill their funnel until an offer is accepted. Remember: until the company representative is discussing a starting salary and a start date, it may not be an offer.

At this phase, your client should inquire about specifics, such as compensation, benefits and start date.

Finally, encourage your client to ask, "Is there anything else? Any other benefit I forgot to ask about?" Once your client has the information—the details of the offer—they should ask for time to consider the offer.

The Ask

Keep in mind that each person is different. Possibly, working in a field that lights their heart, working from home, having zero commute or an amazing boss could mean more to them than extra cash. Therefore, it's important to factor these variables into your calculations when considering salary. The goal of this process is to come up with an ask.

You can have multiple things on that list, but when you ask the company, ask only once. Note that it may well take some back and forth to reach a final agreement. Nevertheless, you want to put it everything on the table at once.

The goal is to have data to support any request your client makes. For example, if your client wants a different title than the one on offer, they need to be able to state why. If they want a higher starting pay, they should have a solid justification. Your client should talk with you and review these items ahead of time so that they feel comfortable with their justifications.

Even if your client is happy with the offer as-is, it's still best to have an ask. The reason for this is two-fold:

- Their future earnings with the company will be partially based on their starting rate. The higher the base, the more money they'll earn over time.
- They may be expecting your client to negotiate, if your client doesn't, they've left money on the table.

Hanging Your Shingle

The narrower your niche, the more successful your business will be. Think of your niche as the type of client you want to serve. Your niche differentiates you from other career coaches. Moreover, it allows you to specialize. For an example of niche, consider a career coach who only works with veterans. Another example: a life coach who only works with widows.

When considering niche, factor in your own knowledge and preferences. Don't pick a niche solely because it sounds like it might be profitable. Do you have a passion for serving these individuals? This way, when you find your niche, you'll be more of an asset to your clients because you'll be uniquely prepared to help them solve their problems.

Finding True North

Once you've identified your niche, write your True North statement. Think of True North as the direction in which your goals and dreams lie. What goal can you set right now that will help you move toward success? Examples:

- Help 10,000 individuals in the military translate their skills to civilian jobs by 2023.
- Touch 250,000 people by finding jobs they love by 2023.

Identifying your niche will make you a more effective career coach because it focuses you. That is to say, writing your True North statement will light a fire under you to help you reach your goals.

What's in a Name?

If a name for your new business does not immediately come to mind, you can use your first and last name and tag on 'Career Coaching' or 'Consulting' to the end. Your name becomes your brand, and that is the strongest and most effective way to start. It's also the most cost effective way to start.

Statement of Work

A statement of Work (S.O.W.) protects you. It outlines how you will meet the client's expectations and it outlines your expectations from the client. At a minimum, always discuss the client's expectations prior to starting the engagement.

Client Onboarding

Start each strategy call with a very short period of pleasantries, and then get right into the conversation. Set expectations early by telling the potential client how the conversation will flow. This will increase the prospect's confidence in you, and it helps keep the conversation on track. This can also serve as a useful filter. If a client pushes back against you taking the

lead, it's quite possible they're not a match for you.

Get Them to Open Up

The next step in the client onboarding process is to understand their dream come true. What is their dream job, career or position? Give the prospect time to talk here. This process should take at least 15 minutes. Gently probe until you have a clear idea of their dream come true. Next, ask pointed questions so you can determine their strategy thus far.

Communicate Your Value

Once you understand their goals and how they've tried to achieve those goals thus far, make it clear to the client how you can solve their problem. It's best to put this in their own words. Use their terminology. You can think of this as a handshake of sorts.

When you begin to use their words, you connect with where they are. Avoid using your own terminology. For instance, don't say 'however' if they say 'but.' Using your terminology here may intimidate the client, and it positions you further away from them.

Next, talk about ideas—solutions to their problems. Describe the benefits of coaching. Example:

"I can help you get unstuck. I can help you get clear. I can help you create documents that highlight your skills."

Empower

Your prospect is stuck and wants to get unstuck as soon as possible. You have the space to support them right now, but that may not be the case tomorrow. Ask for payment over the phone within a very short period of time. The longer someone delays taking this crucial step—handing over their credit card information—the easier it is to talk themselves out of taking that step.

Managing Fear

Starting a business can be a scary thing. When faced with mounting bills after having just put your new shingle out as a career coach, it is easy to just go get a job instead.

This is the amygdala talking. The amygdala is an almond-shaped part of your brain's limbic system. Its purpose is to scan the environment and alert you to potential dangers. But if left unchecked, your amygdala can hinder you—and it can hinder your clients.

Once you know your prospect's professional and spiritual background, you'll know how to address this appropriately. Some might respond well to talk of the so-called 'Negative Nelly.' Others might prefer the anatomical term amygdala. Still others may prefer terminology like 'negative energy.' Whatever the case, it's important you know how to help your client calm theirs.

You can use your extensive experience to help others find their dream jobs while generating substantial success yourself. Through careful client onboarding and savvy coaching, and by remaining calm under pressure, you too can find unbridled success as a career coach.



Cara Heilmann has helped over 700 people get jobs they love. Prior to, Cara was VP and executive of talent acquisition teams for large national and international companies—ARAMARK, Kaiser Permanente®, Baxter Healthcare—and small to mid-sized firms. Cara is a best-selling author of ***The Art of Finding the Job You Love***, and co-author with renown Brian Tracy of the best-selling book ***Ready, Set, Go!*** Cara consults at companies to build internal career coaching teams that both manage recruiting and reductions to retain talent by redeploying them within their own organization.

Confessions Of The Accidental Career Coach: Surprising Secrets to Create a Life-Changing Job Helping Others Become Who They Are Meant to Be © 2020 Cara Heilmann. Summarized by permission of the publisher, Morgan James Publishing. 142 pages, ISBN 978-1642795912 Summary copyright ©2020 by Soundview Book Summaries®

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Drive Your Career

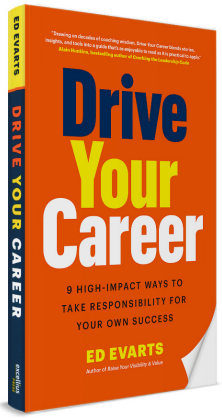
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Drive Your Career

9 High-Impact Ways to Take Responsibility for Your Own Success



by **Ed Evarts**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Too many people enter a career and let that career drive them. They stay in jobs longer than they should, or fail to make an impact in the opportunities they do have. Whatever the reason, more and more people from entry-level positions up to management and executive roles are looking for ways to take command and take charge of their careers.

That's where leadership and career consultant Ed Evarts comes in, with his book ***Drive Your Career: 9 High-Impact Ways to Take Responsibility for Your Own Success***. It's for the ambitious and talented who are ready to take their careers to the next level, but aren't quite sure where to start. In *Drive Your Career,* you'll find a set of 9 powerful principles designed to provide the empowerment and personal insight to steer your career where you want it to go. From developing a stronger relationship with your boss to asking essential questions of yourself, harnessing the power of curiosity to delivering better presentations—it's all inside of ***Drive Your Career***.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to create a positive relationship with your boss and harness positive relationships with colleagues to further your career.
- The power of curiosity, and why it's better to listen first and speak second.
- How slowing down can get you to your goals faster, and why it's important to ask yourself key questions before starting a task.
- How to lead with empathy to inspire the people around you to greater heights.

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Meghan P. Kozak, Editor-in-Chief • Kylie Waytuck, Graphic Designer

Introduction

The goal of *Drive Your Career* is to make readers better captains of their careers and help them make positive progress at work. A simple set of behaviors and actions can help everyone, even if people don't always believe it. While the specifics of each client's situation are unique to them, at the core of addressing many work-related issues are common behaviors and actions that, if practiced regularly, can help anyone make progress in their organization, earn the respect of their co-workers, and be more productive and happier at work.

While you may not need to implement all nine ideas in this book, you likely need to apply many of them. Meanwhile, the ideas are not presented in order of importance and doing something recurrently matters more than doing it frequently. Keep all of this in mind as you learn about the career-driving tips to come.

Have a Positive Relationship with Your Boss

When you have a positive relationship with your boss, many wonderful and career-enhancing things—opportunities, praise, promotions, pay increases—are possible. Your life as an employee is easier, you have more impact, and you're in a stronger position to drive your career forward. The benefits of having a good relationship with your boss can be remembered using the acronym HELP.

H is for Harness

A boss with whom you have a positive relationship will help you harness your skills and apply them effectively in your organization. If your workplace is like most, you're probably working on dozens of things at once and your energy and focus are diffused. A positive relationship with your boss can help you concentrate your energy on the things that impact your career the most.

E is for Evolve

As the saying goes, "Things that don't grow, die." Your boss can help ensure that your ideas grow and evolve in ways that benefit your organization and ultimately advance your career.

L is for Learn

To move forward in your career, you need to be different tomorrow from how you are today. In many organizations, professional development falls more on the shoulders of individual employees than on the training department. A boss with whom you have a positive relationship can help you learn how to do your job better.

P is for Proactive

Organizations will love you if you prepare them for an ever-changing marketplace by always thinking about what's around the corner. A boss with whom you have a positive relationship will remind you to do exactly that.

No One Knows You Better Than You Do

In today's workplace, people are so focused on goals, objectives, projects, and getting to meetings that they don't spend enough time with the person who knows them best—themselves. As a result, few people are actually aware of what they know about themselves. When you have low self-awareness, you can't effectively manage your strengths and weaknesses, achieve your goals in the workplace, or drive your career forward.

To increase your self-awareness, you need to spend time with yourself, thinking about what you should do to make progress and be successful. This process could be called 'thinking with yourself.'

Imagine that you're sitting down with yourself and discussing your goals, dreams, desires, and next steps. You are not here to think about yourself, as if you're a voyeur of your own life. Thinking with yourself is much more creative and action-oriented.

Work on building your self-awareness of your strengths and weaknesses. With higher self-awareness, you'll be able to actively manage your behavior to maximize your impact. Who wouldn't want that?

Be the Most Curious Person in the Room

If you ask questions about the weather forecast before taking a trip, you can plan your trip better. Similarly, when you ask questions before sharing an idea or giving an opinion, your idea or opinion will be better. Asking questions before you speak allows you to learn why someone feels the way they feel, or whether they have a different opinion from yours, or what they know and don't know.

Asking questions is the best way to discover more about what others think or know before you share what you think or know.

The solution is not to be the first to speak—it's to be the

most curious person in the room. The most curious person in the room will come to better conclusions, share better ideas, and help others.

That said, someone who is curious but a poor listener will never be an effective leader or driver of their career. If you ask a question and don't listen to the answer, you will severely limit the benefits of being curious. Why? Because powerful questions lead to powerful answers, which lead to powerful questions, which lead to more powerful answers.

Focus your energy on listening more and demonstrating curiosity. Those who wait will participate more effectively than those who go first.

Bell Curves Rock

If you do an internet search on the term 'bell curve,' you'll find millions of results, which just goes to show how pervasive the bell curve is in our daily lives. In almost anything you experience, a few data points will be highly favorable, a few data points will be highly unfavorable, and most data points will fall somewhere in the middle.

Consider the bell curve principle in another way—Some will love your idea, some won't like your idea, and some will find your idea satisfactory. Do you focus so much time and effort on selling your idea that you are unprepared when someone pushes back? What has happened to you when you've been unprepared to respond to someone's pushback?

The bell curve will help you refine your ideas, gain support for them, and ultimately make positive progress.

Before presenting an idea, try to consider all the negative reactions your colleagues might have so that you're ready to address them. You are more likely to make progress when you are just as prepared for criticisms as you are for praise.

Colleagues Are Your Best Resource

Organizations are filled with colleagues. They're everywhere! Yet not all colleagues are the same. Some are new to the organization, while others have been there for years, even decades. Some just show up to collect a paycheck, others are deeply committed to the organization's vision and mission.

Know How to Help

Are you so focused on your own role and your own deliverables that the idea of reaching out to a colleague hasn't even crossed your mind? Have you ever thought of connecting this way? Reach out to tenured colleagues in your organization in order to make progress. There are others around you who have experienced what you're experiencing today.

Play the Hand You're Dealt

When you interview for a new job, or are considered for a promotion in your current workplace, it's highly likely that you'll be led to believe that the situation you're stepping into is better than it really is. After all, the folks interviewing you have a position to fill, so they will typically exaggerate the positives and diminish the negatives. That's human nature.

Only you can assess if you're holding a good hand, a bad hand, or a so-so hand when it comes to your workplace. What you do with that hand depends on where you want to go.

Have you been dealt a good or a bad hand when it comes to your workplace culture? If you've been dealt a bad hand, are you thinking about folding or are you investing in bluffing? How tiring is each of these behaviors?

If your company is not a great place to work, now is the time to take action rather than fold or bluff. What can you do differently today to ensure that you have better experiences in your workplace?

Pausing is Powerful

Pausing does not necessarily mean working more slowly or taking a long time to decide or act. Pausing is a strategic activity that allows you to think more about your agenda, your workload, and your relationships before you interact with others or make decisions. Pausing is about thinking first and acting second.

To be more effective as a leader, and to better connect with your team members, you should use the power of the pause. Pausing will also help you avoid costly or time-consuming mistakes and will ultimately help you, your team, and your organization make more efficient progress. If you move too quickly in your interactions with colleagues, you will likely spend valuable time repeating things you've already explained, correcting errors that your or your colleagues have made, and apologizing to clients for mistakes that have occurred. Pausing will actually help you move faster.

Do you work at a pace that's hard for others to keep up with? Can you think of any situation where your fast pace has led to a mistake, a redo, or the need to explain something again and again?

Practice pausing and you'll find you move more quickly. If you listen to others first and move forward purposefully, you'll see better results for yourself and your team.

It's All About Feedback

The goal of giving feedback is to guide employees to develop their own careers and to make sure the organization benefits as well. Who better than a leader to share immediate feedback about something that could have been done better, or to supply scheduled feedback on an employee's overall performance and how it might evolve? Whether your employees have more or less experience than you, your feedback can lead them to think about the interactions they're having now and how they might handle those interactions more effectively in the future.

Delivering feedback is a win-win activity. Employees benefit by learning from their leader's insights and ideas, which helps them progress in their careers. Leaders benefit from the improved departmental performance that results from their employees moving in the right direction.

Do you give your team members immediate and scheduled feedback on a regular basis? If you don't, how might this behavior be hurting your team's performance and career development?

If you are giving your team members immediate and scheduled feedback, could you make this feedback even better? If you're not doing this and you want to begin, what are the first steps you can take?

Actually, It's All About Empathy

Demonstrating empathy is the ultimate win-win. You benefit and so do the others around you. You need to show empathy to be effective as a leader or to steer your way forward at any stage of your career.

Here are some key tips for improving your instincts for empathy in the workplace:

- Notice the behaviors of others.
- Ask permission to speak with your colleague.
- Be clear about why you want to speak with your colleague.
- Ask your colleague if you can do anything to help.
- Acknowledge your colleague's feelings.
- Reiterate to your colleague that you're there to help.

If you're known for being empathetic, how can you teach others to show empathy more often? If you seldom show empathy, how can you use the suggestions here to start practicing empathy with others?

No one is perfect. But each one of us can become more aware of how we can shift from the passenger's seat of our career to the driver's seat.



Ed Evarts is the founder and president of Excellius Leadership Development, a Boston-based coaching organization. Ed is the author of Raise Your Visibility & Value: Uncover the Lost Art of Connecting on the Job and the host of Be Brave@Work, a weekly podcast in which leaders share stories about bravery-or the lack of it-in their careers, and the impact their choices have had on their career progression. Ed is a past president of the International Coach Federation of New England, the fifth-largest coaching affiliation group in the United States. **www.excellius.com**

Drive Your Career: 9 High-Impact Ways to Take Responsibility for Your Own Success by Ed Evarts © 2020 by Ed Evarts. Summarized by permission of the publisher, Excellius Press, produced by Page Two Books 162 pages, ISBN 978-1734500400 Summary copyright © 2021 by Soundview Book Summaries ® www.summary.com, 1-800-SUMMARY.

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Evolve

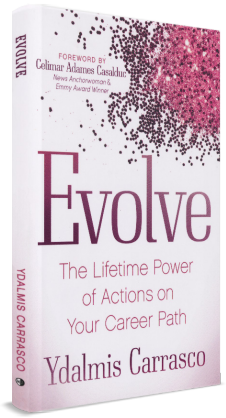
Ydalmis Carrasco

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Evolve

The Lifetime Power of Actions on Your Career Path



by **Ydalmis Carrasco**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Ydalmis Carrasco is a forward-thinking commercial operation and marketing executive with experience in generating revenue and improving operational performance. As she traveled around the world, working in corporate and coaching women from different countries, she discovered her mission—to find as many people as possible, help them, and wake them up to move forward in their lives!

Now is time for you to look around and find a good, comfortable spot and be by yourself. It's time to ask for clarity, to find a map with the right path and the key to a door that goes beyond your desires. Start asking yourself these questions: What is that fire inside of me that can't be extinguished? What keeps me awake during the night? Why haven't I made it happen yet?

Those types of questions are the ones that will take you closer to those dreams that have been in the back of your head for years. Now it is time for you to reactivate them and put them in motion.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- To evaluate your desires so you can start your path to success.
- How to assess your skills to get on the right path.
- The value of connecting with others along the journey.
- The importance of daily action plans to move forward.

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Sarah T. Dayton, Editor-in-Chief • Meghan Kozak, Director of Content • Kylie O'Connor, Graphic Designer

Introduction

All of us have a voice inside that keeps telling us, "What are you going to do?" "I'm waiting for you to do something different," "When is the day that you are going to make the decision?" and "Let me get out of here!"

Do you know how many people like you desire to be in power, to manifest personal goals, and to have the abundance and the professional career path that they dream of? You are not alone.

Are You A Pro Yet?

Probably when you were young, you dreamed about being famous or having a future that is related to your passion. Or maybe you even dreamed of having the best of both worlds: working hard but playing harder.

Sometimes with dreams, we don't know how we can be closer to make them come true. The reality is that every time you find a way to invest in your personal and professional development, the achievements are higher.

Take an Assessment

According to industry experts, the average number of times someone switches careers is four times. The way to identify the first step is by asking yourself what your passion is

The "CliftonStrengths assessment," highlighted in the book ***StrengthsFinder 2.0*** by Tom Rath, can introduce you to the power and potential strength that you have.

Connect on LinkedIn

Connect with people who are in the industry you would like to work with. Search for human resource officers, recruiters, professionals who are decision-makers, managers, directors, and even VPs. Connect with personal notes. You need to contact at least fifty people for a five percent response.

Implement a Daily Routine

Your agenda and schedule must be your "bestie" from day one. You need to have everything scheduled, personal and work-related, so be sure that you include time for lunch or to do something that gives you relief at the end of the day. Read all the emails in your inbox, delete what you don't need, unsubscribe from the unnecessary ones, and prioritize what to respond to.

What should a daily routine hold? Read an article or a book or find a source that is related to your field to keep you informed. Meditate, pray, and create a mantra about your vision to be closer to your desires. Write in a journal and get into a flow of gratitude. Release what is not working and manifest your goal. And, finally, do at least fifteen to thirty minutes of exercise that keeps you in good shape, emotionally and physically.

Many Hats And Stages

Are you overwhelmed? Have too much on your plate? Losing focus? Been there, done that! But the difference is to take it with a positive attitude.

Multi-task

Managing multiple projects may seem like a daunting challenge. Fortunately, there are several resources and strategies to help you stay on track and make it happen. If you set your priorities, don't procrastinate, work smart, and play harder, life is going to surprise you back.

Be Positive

On your way to work, make a plan to start the day on the positive side. For example, open the door for someone, smile to others at least twenty times in the morning (count it), give a compliment, or even stop at a bakery to buy some pastries for a client, for your peers, or even for the kids at school. The satisfaction that you receive is priceless, and more people are going to see the kindness in you. You are going to have a great start, full of positivity and energy.

Be Social

Open your heart to a new era and be social! When I say social, I mean both virtual and face-to-face social. The best way to increase your followers is by speaking the truth, being authentic, and being consistent.

We juggle so many responsibilities. We are parents, sometimes single parents, and we have our careers, our friends, and our family goals. Some of us are the breadwinners of our homes and have other plans that we want to complete, as well. This is key. Be fearless and take measured risks because life is all about that.

Connect And Expand

Social media connections are essential. This electronic communication can create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, content, and even expand

Be constantly connected, align your message with your brand, have consistency, and be yourself.

beyond international markets. Facebook has 2 billion users, Instagram 800 million, and LinkedIn 500 million. That means that in terms of expansion, reach, and frequency, social media is almost a technologic miracle that can be translated directly to your business.

Be constantly connected, align your message with your brand, have consistency, and be yourself. Go and practice today. Have fun and be social!

What Makes You Stronger

Your mental health can affect your daily life and your relationships and is also connected to your physical health. Mental health includes the ability to enjoy and obtain balance between life events or activities and efforts.

Know your Emotions

Did you see the movie Inside Out? It is an animated movie about a young girl who has a wonderful life until her family moves to San Francisco, and her emotions get out of control. How many times have you let your emotions control your day?

Watch the movie to gain insight about your emotions. That will help you to understand ways to do and say things that sometimes are not under your control, while others are easier to manage.

Practice Positivity

Find happiness in your decisions, and when the day surprises you with something that was not part of your plan, embrace that moment and look for the positive side of it. One thing that may help you relax and bring balance to your days is meditation, prayers, or journaling.

Go and do something that you enjoy. We can have a hundred things to do, but if we don't face our challenges with positive thoughts, there's always going to be a moment that you complain, a moment that you feel uncomfortable, a moment of anger, and a moment of disappointment.

Leaders Are Learners

What is a leader? Here is the definition from the business dictionary: "A person or thing that holds a dominant or superior position within its field and is able to exercise a high degree of control or influence over others."

You Can Lead

"A woman leader is capable to reach the impossible and carry her team to exceed their possibilities." Do you know how many women run the show in their country? And how many others are screaming to be out of their internal prison to let the world know about their desires and start creating their own empires?

You must let others know that you are ready to speak up, show them who you are, what your desire is, and then let the leader in you spread their wings. If you don't stop doing what you have been doing for the last ten years, you are going to be in the same position in ten more years.

Today is Your Day

Go back in history and remember when in your life was the last time that you decided to make a drastic change or face a turning point that made a huge impact, and people noticed it. It could have been a graduation, a wedding, childbirth, homeownership, travel out of the country, car ownership; any of these could be a significant turning point that you experienced in your life already.

Are you ready to be that person who has the guts to declare, "Today is the day that I want to make my life and my dreams come true?" Can you stand up right now and look in the mirror and recite slowly from your heart, these words?

What Is Your Uniqueness

Talent is the best word to describe what is in you that makes you stand out from the rest of the people around the world. This a special ability and aptitude that you possess. You can do something without trying as hard. What is it? What do you have in you? Share with others your uniqueness.

Step up to Leadership

In 2015, the Gallup company conducted a study that showed that "about one in 10 people possess high talent to manage. Though many people have some of the necessary traits, few have the unique combination of talent needed to help a team achieve the kind of excellence that significantly improves a company's performance. When these 10% are put in manager roles, they naturally engage team members and customers, retain top performers, and sustain a culture of high productivity."

If you are people-oriented, committed, and intuitive, you may be in the 10%. Being willing to take risks and motivating others are also markers of a leader.

Don't Hide Your Talent

If you have a talent that has been hidden, that is very special, that makes you unique, you must do something about it. You should love to show others your skills and the gift that is part of the total package of who you are. Every time that you share your talent, you are helping others do the same. At the same time, your family, your friends, your peers, and everyone around you are going to be impacted. And guess what? It is your legacy, and that will remain from generation to generation.

If you look at the term ***uniqueness***, in mathematics, it is related to the phrase "there is one and only one." It is used to indicate that exactly one object with a specific property exists. It is the same about everyone in life. To stand out in the market, you are one and only one who is going to make a difference with your own formula. Be bright, strong, and conquer the world out there.

Who Are You Now?

Imagine that I'm walking down the street and we see each other, and I say, "Hey, tell me about your life! I haven't seen you for a while, and I can tell that you look different." What is your answer? What will it be one year from now? People are going to start noticing that you are doing something different.

When you begin planning your life and start seeing great results, you will feel empowered. Think on the action plans from ***Evolve***. You may want to go back and start creating templates and make a plan of action, lists, or start calling people. You will be on fire!

We have been talking about professional life, education, uniqueness, leadership, money, responsibilities, roles, and networking. Now it is time for you to start getting ready and continue with the new journey, taking into consideration that what you are going to do is for real and forever.

Challenge yourself daily to improve and get better with what you feel passionate about, to have new goals, and to be ambitious with short- and long-term plans. If you can have a timeline to see your forecast planning, it will be amazing!



Ydalmis Carrasco possesses over twenty years of experience working in the pharmaceutical, medical device, and biologics industries on communication, commercial operations, and marketing for Fortune 500 companies. Originally from Cuba and raised in Puerto Rico, Ydalmis now resides in Miami, Florida.

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Failing Fast

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Failing Fast?

The 10 Secrets to Succeed Faster



by **Luv Tulsidas**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

With the world demanding more innovation from business leaders, the only way for companies to succeed is to find a way to generate bigger profits and deliver more value. And the only way this can be achieved is by succeeding faster and more cost-effectively at innovation. Offering a fresh perspective on "Innovation Done Right," ***Failing Fast? The 10 Secrets to Succeed Faster*** challenges the conventional "fail fast, fail often" mentality, advocating instead for a more strategic approach to innovation that emphasizes rapid success through smart, informed decision-making.

Author Luv Tulsidas leverages his personal experiences and insights to create a practical guide for entrepreneurs, leaders, and innovators who are navigating the complexities of modern markets. By aligning with the zeitgeist, or the prevailing spirit of the times, business leaders can learn how to leverage market trends, technological advancements, and customer needs to create impactful and successful products. Through a combination of theoretical insights and real-world examples, Tulsidas illustrates how to transform fear into a superpower, work smarter rather than harder, and build resilient, motivated teams to enable financial success and foster growth.

IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY:

- Align with the zeitgeist and tap into prevailing market trends.
- Develop a seeker mindset to navigate complex business challenges.
- Create and leverage wow factors to differentiate your products.
- Work smarter and prioritize high-impact activities for maximum efficiency.

Part I: The Succeed-Faster Mindset

Chapter 1: Dream Big and Do Bold

We are at a critical inflection point marked by significant technological and societal changes. There are two possible futures: one where technology enslaves humanity for the benefit of a few, and another where innovation enriches human experiences for all.

To influence the outcome positively, we must dream big and act boldly – the first secret to succeeding faster. However, dreaming big alone is not enough. Even the most ambitious of the visionaries and bravest of the brave end up "dying a slow death by one thousand cuts" on their journey to success.

Dreaming big and doing bold requires a combination of vision, courage, and the willingness to take risks. From my childhood, where my dreams and bold actions, despite challenges and failures, shaped my path to success, I learned that success is a deeply personal journey. It's not about emulating others but becoming the best version of oneself. "Success is uniquely individual" and involves overcoming societal expectations and personal limitations.

True success comes from within and is achieved by being authentic and committed to your vision. The first two steps to success that every leader should follow are:

1. Unlearning the fail-fast mindset that is prevalent in our society today.

Most of us cannot afford to fail once, let alone fail often. This is why we need to get rid of the mindset that failure is a good thing. Instead of looking forward to and celebrating failure and associating positive feelings to it, let's focus on what we can learn from it in order to evolve.

2. Tapping into the zeitgeist.

Instead of just leaving it to luck and charging full speed ahead, leaders need to adopt a smarter approach and spend some time studying the quality of their idea in comparison to the competitive landscape. Without alignment with the zeitgeist, it is nearly impossible to achieve success, regardless of how good your idea is and how bold your actions are.

Chapter 2: Be a Seeker, Not a Bullshitter!

The second secret to succeeding faster is to be a seeker, not a bullshitter. The seeker mindset is essential for tapping into the zeitgeist and succeeding faster. Unlike bullshitters, who are overly optimistic without grounding their actions in reality, seekers are dedicated to finding the truth and understanding their goals deeply. Intellectual honesty and avoiding the "fake it till you make it" mentality are crucial. Through my experiences as a reformed bullshitter, I illustrate the value of a seeker's approach in achieving long-term success.

The reason why even the most ambitious and hardest-working people struggle with success is not the lack of information and knowledge. The problem is that ambitious people tend to have alpha personalities, and alphas are naturally predisposed to be overly optimistic, which earns them the reputation of a bullshitter.

The typical journey of bringing an innovative idea to market with the bullshitter mindset consists of the following three phases:

- Dreaming
- Execution
- Promotion

The missing link is adding a Seeking Phase between dreaming and execution. When we have a dream that we feel very passionate about, instead of running to execute on it, we must take the time to seek the truth.

Being a seeker means constantly striving for knowledge and understanding. It requires a commitment to learning, questioning assumptions, and seeking out the truth. This mindset is crucial for navigating the complexities of innovation and entrepreneurship. By focusing on reality and staying grounded, seekers are better equipped to make informed decisions and achieve sustainable success.

With a simple but highly effective two-step exercise, entrepreneurs can make the evolution to the seeker mindset:

Step 1: Write "I am a seeker, not a bullshitter!" on a piece of paper, and read it aloud.

Step 2: Repeat the above nine more times.

And whenever you catch yourself drifting into a dreamy or promotional mood, take a one-minute pause, and practice this exercise before making any decisions.

Chapter 3: Tapping into the Zeitgeist

The zeitgeist, or the prevailing spirit of the times, is critical for innovators and entrepreneurs. Successful companies like Apple and Amazon aligned with the zeitgeist, leading to massive success. By understanding and validating the relevant zeitgeist for one's business idea – the third secret to

Aligning with the zeitgeist is not just about riding the wave; it's about anticipating the wave and preparing to harness its power.

succeeding faster – one can position one's product to meet the demands of the time.

Understanding the zeitgeist requires keen observation and the ability to connect the dots between emerging trends and market needs. Aligning with the zeitgeist is not just about riding the wave; it's about anticipating the wave and preparing to harness its power.

There are four types of market timing conditions that leaders need to identify and study before launching their idea:

1. Greenfield Market — "The Zeitgeist"

A Greenfield market timing condition occurs when the demand for a product or service closely representing yours ranges from high to very high, while the supply/competition is significantly lower. This window of opportunity is usually very short, as more people become aware of the competitive advantage, and the market suddenly becomes very competitive or "Redfield." A good example of a Greenfield market timing condition was the e-commerce/online retail industry boom in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Amazon, eBay).

2. Redfield Market—"The Disruptor"

A Redfield market timing is when demand is high and growing and supply is following the same course, enabling intense competition. Google is an example of a market disruptor that entered a Redfield market in the late 1990s, being able to capture a significant share of the market from established competitors, due to their unique approach.

3. Brownfield Market—"Long-Term Potential"

A Brownfield market happens when demand is low to medium but not really established yet, and supply is usually nonexistent because the market is very speculative and quite challenging to break into from a technical standpoint. This is largely why many markets remain Brownfield for extended periods, even decades.

4. Deadfield Market—"Stay Away"

In a Deadfield market, demand for a particular product/service is falling consistently, but supply remains high as many established competitors are already in the field. This leads to inevitable death.

Chapter 4: My Personal Experience with the Zeitgeist

Drawing from my journey in the corporate world and as the founder of Techolution, I share insights on aligning with the zeitgeist. Building a successful business requires leveraging novel technologies and continuously learning and adapting to stay relevant. My experiences highlight the importance of understanding market trends and opportunities.

While building Techolution to become the brand that is admired for 'Innovation done right' across the world, I had the privilege of working with a variety of businesses on their major transformation initiatives. As we were earning a reputation for delivering hyper-velocity success on impossible innovation projects for major clients, my business was growing rapidly.

When I started Techolution, I recognized the transformative potential of AI and digital technologies. By staying attuned to these trends, I was able to position my company at the forefront of digital innovation.

Chapter 5: Turn Your Fear into a Superpower

The fourth secret to succeeding faster is that fear, when understood and managed, can be transformed into a superpower. For the world to evolve faster toward an optimistic vision of the future, we need more leaders armed with the ability to listen to their fear and transform it into a superpower. Understanding the five key rules of fear is essential:

Rule #1: Being fearless is dumb and ineffective.

Rule #2: To gain the courage needed to lead the way, fear should neither be suppressed nor overpowered.

Rule #3: One of the most powerful secrets to success is to always pause to listen to your fear (inner voice) and process what it is trying to tell you before acting.

Rule #4: Everyone has the ability to evoke their inner greatness to become successful leaders if and when needed by learning to manage their fears.

Rule #5: Fear is your friend, but procrastinating over the fear of failing is not going to get you anywhere.

Listening to your fear and processing it will help you succeed faster. Embracing fear involves acknowledging it and using it as a catalyst for growth. Rather than allowing fear to paralyze you, use it as a motivator to push beyond your comfort zone. Understand how to turn fear into a superpower by following these ten steps:

1. Practice on becoming aware the moment you feel fear in your heart.
2. Pause all thoughts and actions for a moment to switch focus from the physical feeling of fear to identifying the underlying "what if" questions triggering this emotion.
3. Start acknowledging your inner voice by writing down the "what if " questions that are in your subconscious.
4. Figure out what you are afraid of losing by taking the action you have in mind.
5. Pause to process the potential obstacles and risks in the form of the "what if " questions that you have noted in step 4.
6. Assess the reality and severity of each individual risk and score it on a scale of 0–10.
7. For each one of the risks that score above 6, come up with a plan of action to mitigate them.
8. Be open-minded to let the fear be right sometimes!
9. Acknowledge and process your team and stakeholders' fears as well.
10. Revisit the previously processed fears as your situations change.

Following this step-by-step process can help even the most risk-averse people easily process their fear and turn it into a source of strength.

Chapter 6: Working Hard Does Not Pay Off

The fifth secret, working smarter, not harder, is key to achieving faster and more sustainable success. By prioritizing high-impact activities and leveraging technology, you can achieve significant breakthroughs without burning out. Some key strategies for working smart that can help you avoid the pain of doing mindless hard work from the very beginning of your journey include:

- Avoid brute forcing your way to success by just increasing the number of hours you put into your efforts.
- Master the core skills needed to bring real value to your market.
- Build a highly productive team that believes in your vision.
- Start working harder only when you have found a clear path to your destination.
- Figure out when slowing down is better than working harder to avoid burning out.
- Slow down growth, if needed, to improve your processes, and make your execution highly effective and scalable.
- Develop automation and innovative intellectual property to accelerate growth and profits.

Leaders need to develop a daily habit of working smart, to maximize productivity and achieve long-term success, and can do so by following a step-by-step process curated to help develop a mindset that prioritizes efficiency and effectiveness over busyness.

Chapter 7: The Zeitgeist—A Market Timing Deep Dive

Market timing is crucial for aligning with the zeitgeist. Different market timing strategies influence the success of a product or business. By analyzing case studies and examples of each market timing condition (Greenfield – the iPhone, Redfield – Google, Brownfield – Tesla, Deadfield – Blockbuster) and providing tools for assessing market readiness, I equip readers to make informed decisions about market entry and expansion.

Continuous monitoring and adaptation are necessary to stay ahead of market trends. Out of the four possible market timing conditions, there are only two market timing strategies that can open the portal of the zeitgeist for you: Greenfield and Redfield. Understanding when to enter a market and when to pivot is essential for leveraging the zeitgeist effectively.

By taking an in-depth look at each market timing condition and understanding how it works, business leaders can leverage a zeitgeist predictive model to understand where their idea is situated:

It should be noted that when a business loses its wow factor, like what happened with Yahoo in the late 1990s, it is the beginning of the end, regardless of its size.

Step1: Plot the demand and supply scores.

Step 2: Interpret the Zeitgeist Model. If your idea fits in the Greenfield box, it suggests that your market timing is right and you should proceed to step 3. If you fit in the Redfield box, consider the market timing to be aligned only if the problem urgency score is 7 or greater.

Step 3: Proceed to the next level of research and idea testing. Analyze the "wow" factor and day-1 customer discovery.

Part II: The Succeed-Faster Method

Chapter 8: The "Wow" Factor

The sixth secret to succeeding faster is identifying your wow factor. If the zeitgeist is like a compass telling you whether you are going in the right direction, then the wow factor is the zoomed-in view of the map with the exact coordinates of where and how your product/service should land in the market you have chosen.

It should be noted that when a business loses its wow factor, like what happened with Yahoo in the late 1990s, it is the beginning of the end, regardless of its size. Hindsight can be twenty-twenty with the wow factors, but leaders can get close to finding their wow element by ideating through different levels until they find the feature that would be the most valuable one to take to market. There are four levels of ideation:

1. Zeitgeist, with a life span of anywhere from seven to twenty years.
2. Your vision, with a life span of one to five years, and ranging from strong vision to bad vision, disconnected vision, vague and weak vision.
3. Wow factor that aligns tightly with a strong vision and the zeitgeist of your era. The MVF of your product or service offering that will bring so much value to your customers that it will make them say "wow" when they experience it.
4. Micro features, representing an idea of what needs to be built in the most refined manner. A well-defined micro feature should not take more than a few hours or days to build.

Chapter 9: Finding Your Wow Factor

Another key secret to working smart and succeeding fast is going beyond with your wow factor and doing the minimum required with your deal breakers. There are five guiding principles to selecting the right wow factor to make sure you resist the temptation to build a product solely based on a great idea:

1. Every wow factor candidate should be treated as a hypothesis.
2. Do not fall in love with your idea just yet!
3. It is difficult to accurately predict a wow factor when looking forward.
4. Do NOT spend any time and money executing your idea.
5. Apply the right combination of emotion, intuition, and intellectual discipline.

A systematic approach to discovering and validating wow factors involves nine steps. Leaders who follow the process closely will find their wow factor faster, with less hassle and lower costs.

Step 1: Find the zeitgeist

Step 2: Awaken your ideation muscle

Step 3: Define a strong vision

Step 4: Brainstorming feature-level ideas

Step 5: Value-to-customer mapping, from level 0 (no value) to level 5 (mind-blowing value)

Step 6: Timeliness-of-idea mapping, form Death Zone to Market Domination Zone

Step 7: Top-down correlation test

Step 8: Productivity score

Step 9: Quality-of-idea score, which combines value-to-customer score × timeliness-of-idea score × productivity score × top-down correlation score to provide a singular meaningful score.

With a wow factor in our arsenal, it is time to learn the next most important success factor—how to choose the right day 1 customer.

Chapter 10: The Viral Spiral Customer

Choosing the right day 1 customer, the eighth secret to succeeding fast, will enable a business to scale the awareness of its wow factor fast and far enough to reach a viral level of growth, which is key to achieving rapid market penetration.

The best predictors of the future virality of a business at the ideation stage are the wow factor and the right day 1 customer. It should be noted that only the right day 1 customer will spread the awareness of your wow factor far enough to spiral your business to a viral level of growth.

Part III: The Succeed-Faster Execution

Chapter 11: Most Valuable Product (MVP)

For the ninth secret to succeeding faster, picking the right battle at the right time, I redefine MVP as "Most Valuable Product" instead of the traditional "Minimum Viable Product." Focusing on the most valuable features ensures a stronger market entry and better customer reception.

An MVP has the following makeup:

- Zeitgeist
- Vision statement
- Day 1 customer profile
- Market opportunity
- Wow factors
- Deal breakers
- Fear factors

This execution framework guides the development of the Most Valuable Product, aligning team efforts and resources towards understanding the "What," "Why," and "Who" of your mission and delivering maximum value to customers.

Chapter 12: How to Fund Your Dream

Funding is essential for turning a business idea into reality. But securing funding can be a daunting challenge for many entrepreneurs. There are three main stages of fundraising to consider:

- Stage #1: The Pre-Seed Stage, where you have an idea on paper and need to build out a prototype.
- Stage #2: The Seed Stage, where investors expect you to have a working prototype and valuable proof of concept.
- Stage #3: The Growth Capital Stage, which you qualify for once you have established product market fit and shown persistent sales/revenue growth of your products.

Securing seed capital is a pivotal chapter in every entrepreneur's story as it can change the course of your business and influence your growth trajectory. It is critical for both startup founders and intrapreneurs in big companies to learn how to win investors. Only then can they get the necessary funding to build a resilient team and deliver on their dream.

Chapter 13: Build a Burn-On Team

Building a resilient and motivated team, referred to as a "burn-on" team, is the tenth and final secret to succeeding fast, being a crucial element of executing the business vision and achieving long-term success.

Having experienced both failures and successes with different team settings, I submit a more modern and effective version of the famous African proverb:

"To go fast, go alone. To go far, go together. But to go fast and far, go together with the right people."

But assembling such an impactful group of people who can burn on through the difficult journey toward success is very tricky. Following these ten rules can help:

1. Build your Most Valuable Team (MVT) first.
2. Articulate your purpose, and ensure it matches with the purpose of your MVT members.
3. Be diligent in ensuring all hires possess strong foundational skills for the job.
4. Do not use money as the main tool to hire your most valuable team members.
5. Hiring nobody is better than hiring the wrong person for the job.
6. Hire fast and fire fast is an old and lazy strategy.
7. Be ruthlessly agile with mandatory weekly sprints.

8. Build a demo culture, and infuse a healthy dose of competition.
9. Democratize ownership, and share the upside fairly.
10. Use the SMARTS approach (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound, and Stretch) for setting goals.

Mastering these ten rules and embedding them into your organizational culture, will help them become proficient at maximizing the potential of individuals and harnessing their collective abilities to achieve your shared company vision faster, further, and frequently.

Conclusion

The world is undergoing a game-changing transformation, with massive technological advancements and major geopolitical and socioeconomic changes.

We are now in the early stages of a new major zeitgeist: the rise of artificial intelligence, likely to have a stronger impact than the last major zeitgeist that started three decades ago when computers and the Internet were introduced to the mainstream.

Such disruptions can be uncomfortable but can also present a major opportunity for established and aspiring leaders to build their ideas.

Those who wait to see what happens will be surely disrupted. But those who make their moves now and follow the principles of innovation done right will become the new disruptors. Now is the moment to accelerate your career and develop your legacy by building a better version of the world for the next generation with the ten secrets to succeed faster.



Born with subpar physical traits and intelligence, the formative years of **Luv Tulsidas** were filled with challenges. He hustled his way from a tiny paradise island in Africa to a decent engineering university in the US without a high school degree. Entering the corporate world at the dawn of the new millennium, he joined Hertz—the car rental giant, and led the development of their e-commerce platform from 0 to $5 Billion in annual revenue. Luv's natural ability to dream big and do bold got him pretty far, and was the catalyst for him starting a company that went on to earn a reputation for innovation done right. In 2019, his brainchild Techolution won the prestigious Inc. 500 award for being one of the fastest-growing companies in America.

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Get CLEAR On Your Career

Valentina Savelyeva

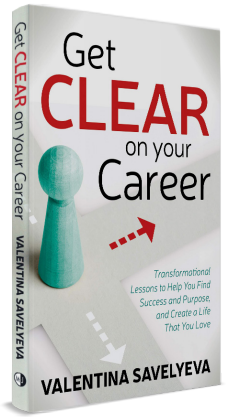
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Get CLEAR On Your Career

Transformational Lessons to Help You Find Success and Purpose, and Create a Life That You Love

by **Valentina Savelyeva**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Many people feel stuck and confused in their professional lives. Often, they are surprised by this because they showed great potential and received recognition early on. Yet years later, they're not doing what they want to do with their lives and don't know how to change things.

Get CLEAR on Your Career: Transformation Lessons to Help You Find Success and Purpose, and Create a Life That You Love is a guide for people who are ready to let go of the training wheels and test out what they can do. For those who are ready to face their messy questions, fears, and feelings and begin finding answers. For dreamers who are ready to move past the "wishing phase" into the "I am taking steps and creating a life that I actually want to live" phase.

Author Valentina Savelyeva, a certified success coach, explains her "CLEAR WAY" framework for professional success. Sprinkling examples throughout the book, she shares the tools and practices she uses with clients to help them develop and achieve a vision that is a Sacred YES! aligned with all parts of themselves, including their hearts.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to align your thoughts and emotions for success.
- Why feeling resistance is good and how to make it work for you.
- How to move past your feeling of being professionally stuck.

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C—Cultivate A State In Which Clarity Is Possible

Clarity is a state of awareness that can be cultivated, not a byproduct of some complicated thinking exercise or research. Information gathering is important, but it is only the first step. The next step is to quiet the chatter in your mind so you can connect to what is important to you.

Connect to the State of Inner Clarity

A key distinction between people who stay stuck and people who begin to move forward quickly is that the former tend to wait until they have clarity about the entire vision for their new career, while the latter focus on cultivating clarity for the next steps and then lean into action.

People who are able to cultivate a practice of calming their mind so they can connect to a state of inner clarity are the most successful. The list of tools that can help you do this is endless. It is not the activity but how you engage in it that matters. Show up with the intention of experiencing a state of mindfulness, being fully present in the here and now, and experience a state of calm focus.

L—Learn How To Dream Effectively

People who move forward and create an incredible level of success are unafraid to dream big in a way that lights them up.

Be very intentional in connecting with your genuine wants. Trying to live someone else's dream for you is like being under the influence of drugs or caffeine: sooner or later, the effects will wear off and you will wake up. The question is, will you still want the same career and life when you wake up?

Dreaming, wanting, and asking for what you want is natural. Just watch a child under age 6, who doesn't worry about her dreams being "realistic." Dream "crazy dreams" and allow all kinds of ideas to come forward without committing to any action. Then take risks, get messy, fail, adjust, and rise and create a professional expression that nobody could have imagined.

E—Enlist A Vision That Is A Sacred Yes!

There is a lot of value in becoming attuned to yourself early on and choosing a direction to begin taking steps toward that reflects a Sacred YES! for you (meaning you know with the core of your being that this decision is a good one).

Try to identify your dream underneath the dream, your goal under the goal—the ones that are half-hidden and driving the whole show. Desires and dreams that derive from the influence of the culture or the people in your life dissolve like smoke, but once you connect to the dreams that are rooted in your heart you can always come back to them to refuel.

Work on creating a vision or several potential visions of what your entire life would look like if you were to lean in and be successful in each of your potential directions. The key is to facilitate a connection to a possible future and basically try it on for size. Our bodies cannot lie, so we know instantly if something is off and can correct our course.

Many people begin to use "what would my future self do?" as a reference point for making decisions.

A—Access Your Personal Success Formula

An action/feedback loop that works effectively looks like this: I get clear on my vision > I take an action step > I get feedback based on that action > I reflect/analyze, incorporate feedback, and adjust the type of action > I take more action >>>> I keep moving toward my vision.

Train yourself to notice how your body reacts when you make a commitment. Does it feel expansive and warm, or does it feel like a punch in the gut? Making only commitments that feel expansive will help you keep them, even when resistance and roadblocks show up.

If you want to move forward consistently, you cannot depend on flimsy unpredictable waves of moods and inspirations that life offers you. You need to slow down and evaluate what truly moves you to action, which is different from what makes you feel comfortable (and potentially sitting on the couch).

R—Receive Maximum Return On Your Energy Investments

Most people want to have more energy. But it's a lot more useful to looking at managing energy flows.

The first thing to do to better manage your energy is identify where you are investing it. Every thought, feeling, and

decision—big or small—requires energy. Most of us are investing so much of our energy in the past or the future that we barely have any left to be fully in the present—and then we wonder why we're so exhausted by midmorning.

Write down all the "open loops" in which you're investing energy. Then begin intentionally closing the ones you no longer wish to keep open.

Energy cannot be created or destroyed; it can only change form. (Sound familiar? It's the first law of thermodynamics.) So, energy is everywhere and you choose how much of it you take into your system. Humans, since our set points are adjustable, can stretch and expand our ability to hold and function on higher and higher levels of energy. The key is to do it intentionally, gently, and consistently while engaging in practices that enhance our openness to receive.

W—Wire Resistance To Work For You

You naturally create set points for pretty much anything in your life—how good you allow yourself to feel at work, your level of happiness, how much money you make and keep, how much love you allow yourself to receive, and on and on.

Notice that even if something traumatic or joyous happens, after a few hours or days you find yourself with a state of mind similar to the one you had before the event. To find it easier to move forward with your goals, you must do the work to shift your set points toward a more desirable place.

Feeling resistance is a clue that you are stretching yourself past your familiar set point. Resistance manifests in behavioral and thought patterns that seem to show up on autopilot when we feel uncomfortable.

Shifting Your Set Points to Higher Levels

Each person has a set point for how they tend to feel. Some people refer to this as being an optimist or pessimist, a generally happy person or a generally resentful person, or any other feeling state that predominates.

Work with affirmations, vision boards, intentions, and prayers can be very effective in helping us retrain our minds and bodies to be more familiar with what we want to create.

For people who are ready for it, taking bold action can be powerful and fun. The key is intentionally choosing to take action that you know will trigger you and take you out of your comfort zone. You must be willing to show up fully and not be attached to getting a specific outcome. Surviving it will reprogram your brain so that it no longer sees that action or a similar action as dangerous. Your set point shifts organically in that particular area.

Reduce the Pull of Resistance

The second path to working with resistance is centered around relieving some of the pressure to prevent the amygdale (the fear center of the brain) from getting overly activated and allow for the chosen action to continue. One tool is to release it by writing down whatever is in your mind and, without re-reading it, destroy and discard it.

Resistance often shows up as a very strong feeling, such as anxiety or a negative spiral of self-criticism. Applying practices for aligning the mind and emotions with your goals will most likely dramatically affect your journey as the resistance declines and you proceed more gracefully.

A—Align Your Thoughts And Emotions For Success

Working with resistance and any feelings that come up can be thought of as a practice of cultivating inner alignment between your Higher Self, mind and emotions, and physical body.

Most people take it for granted that an event leads to a feeling. Since you cannot control all events, this premise leads to a default conclusion that you are a victim of the event. The premise that an event leads to a feeling is missing something important: your interpretation of the event.

Step 1: Build Awareness

Begin to develop a practice that will allow you to slow the moment between the event and your feeling about it and notice your interpretation or conclusion. Once you begin to notice the moment when you make the interpretation, you put yourself in a position of power: you get to choose to keep the interpretation or make another one. Mindfulness practices are helpful with this.

Step 2: Identify Your Beliefs and Interpretations

Look at any belief or interpretation as if you were buying it at a store. In other words, what is it costing you? If you get a sense that it is not serving you, then consider "returning" it. Many limiting thoughts don't serve you. You can choose to begin upgrade them.

Step 3: Update Limiting Beliefs

If a belief is constricting your life, you can choose to explore alternative interpretations of the subject. Pick an interpretation that feels good in your body and find proof from life—two or three instances when that interpretation was "true." This will allow you to integrate the new belief. Affirmations can be helpful.

There is an important difference between being attached to a specific outcome and having a preference. The first is driven by fear of not having something. The latter is rooted in freedom—you prefer a particular outcome, but you'll be okay without it.

Step 4: Process Feelings Effectively

Many people have a semiconscious belief that they can't handle and need to protect themselves from strong feelings. So, once they go past a certain set point, they find ways to suppress and numb feelings. The feelings get stored in the body for years until they have an emotional meltdown or get burned out.

There are many gentle and effective tools for beginning to master digesting emotions without letting them fester.

Y—Yield Financial Results That You Desire

Many people are uncomfortable or unable to talk about money neutrally. They grew up in an environment where people never discussed money and considered caring about money shameful, dirty, and greedy or where they talked about it all the time in way that was charged with "never enough."

Most people confuse net worth (what you own less what you owe) with self-worth. And they also typically tangle self-worth and the value of their service. This dynamic puts them in a very weak position in any money-related conversations. But your inherent value—your worth—is priceless. Period. Your service, however, has a value, and you can work on increasing its value without losing sight of your inherent self-worth and value.

Money is an important partner in your life, here to serve and support you. It is not your master, but it is not an unpaid intern either. It pays to spend some time and energy nurturing a loving and healthy relationship with money.

Conclusion

This book will support you in becoming aware of the blind spots you have been operating with in regard to choosing your profession.

You have to do the deeper work that is required to begin to make choices that are aligned and centered in your heart. If you are running the "I can never change" program in your head, you will continue to subconsciously resist change. Without support and deep inner reflection, it can take a long time to get out of the experience of being stuck.

Stop waiting, connect to your Sacred YES! vision, and begin taking action steps as soon as you can. Your vision is waiting for you!



Valentina Savelyeva is a professional certified success coach, author, and motivational speaker. Before opening her international coaching practice in Los Angeles, she spent a decade leading financial workshops and training programs to raving reviews at top business schools and financial and consulting firms all over the United States and Europe. Valentina is excited to take her skills as a trainer, facilitator, and coach from MBA auditoriums and corporate boardrooms into the public world with her custom Get CLEAR on Your Career program teaching the CLEAR WAY Framework, individual coaching programs, seminars, books, and speaking engagements.

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Get It Together

Puja Bhola Rios

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Get It Together

A Winning Formula for Success from the Boss You Need



by **Puja Bhola Rios**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Everyone loves the taste of success, but only a few truly embark on the difficult journey to get there. The truth is, it is more than possible to be wildly successful. All you need is a push from the boss you always wanted (and wished you had!).

Get It Together: A Winning Formula for Success from the Boss You Need unlocks the journey that can lead you where you envisioned yourself to be. The pages in the book uncover a comprehensive, result-oriented program to help you focus on your personal development and quite simply, "Get It Together."

By bringing her extensive experience as a leader and coach to the table, author Puja Bhola Rios mentors us throughout our journey to success. She helps us hard-wire our brains to work hard, gain clarity about our goals, formulate a comprehensive plan to get there with relentless execution, turn our beast modes on, cultivate critical thinking skills, strategize, work through the pain, and finally become capable of accomplishing anything!

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to build a "Get It Together" (GIT) Mindset.
- How to plan your success and execute it relentlessly.
- How to deploy critical thinking to reach your goals.
- How to stick to your strategy and success even if the journey seems difficult.

Introduction

As a leader, I always teach those around me to keep all their plates spinning in the air, be fierce in all they do, reach the pinnacle of success with tangible results, and not just get together but also keep it together and then grow more.

A big part of my leadership has always been coaching. How could I help the people around me clarify their goals, come up with actionable steps to make them happen, get it together, and transform their lives and careers? Just as I meet with my teams and my clients, I'd love to sit down with you and help you define and plan your goals. However, there is just one of me and many, many of you, so I did the next best thing- I wrote this book.

Every chapter will cover one of the principles I use with my own clients. We will cover the following:

- Being hardwired to work hard
- Clarity about your goals
- Formulating a real plan to get there
- Relentless execution
- "Roar of the Beast" mode
- Critical thinking skills: making time to think (and why it's so important)
- My winning formula for data analytics
- How to spot trends
- How to strategize
- Working through the pain
- Big results – celebrate your wins!

At the end of every chapter, you – my readers – and I (the boss you secretly need!) are going to have a sit-down. You will answer questions to help you strategically create your own winning formula. That said, let's now learn how to get into beast mode and reach the goals you once only dreamed of.

Chapter 1: On Your Mark: Developing the "Get It Together" (GIT) Mindset

As my career started to climb, I noticed that my teams always defied expectations. In the process of writing this book, I realized I learned certain things over my entire life, starting at a young age. My father led my whole family in learning the lessons of hard work as an immigrant and a first-generation American.

When I think about who I am as a leader, I think about hope and clarity. Here's how that sort of talk with one of my team goes: My hope is you have the ability to do this. I believe in you, so this is my sincere hope. The clarity is that here are the expectations of the job and the goals we have as a team. If you don't perform, here are the consequences. But my hope is we can achieve this together. You got this.

Being hardwired to work hard does not involve being on the hamster wheel. The art of working hard includes giving yourself time and space to think. If you're constantly on a hamster wheel, you're working hard, but you are never going to level up. So, define your hope – something that's a reach – in one sentence. With clarity, name something specific you will do this week to move toward that.

Chapter 2: Get Set: The Plan

What are your goals? I hope they are lofty – big dreams that embody what you truly want out of life or the lifestyle you desire, the place you want to live in, the countries you want to travel to, or the career and job you are passionate about.

Now I'm offering a dose of clarity. Unfortunately, many people confuse goals with "the plan" for how to achieve them. While picturing your goals in great detail is important, the process doesn't necessarily prepare you to accomplish that beautiful dream. We can begin by writing down our goals. Writing them down reminds us daily of what we are setting out to achieve.

Create a detailed plan to achieve your goals. Here are some essential elements of "the plan:" Start with knowing your "why" so you have your reason to push through. Hold that why close to you. Commit to it because when the grind times come – and they will – your why can remind you of the meaning of your commitment. Make your goals manageable. Whatever choices you make on a given day, they should cut through the proverbial bullshit. Aligning all or most of your decisions around your main goal will help you get it together.

Set Goldilocks Goals. These are goals that are not too small or too big. Manageable goals do not mean you don't stretch. Your goals should be ambitious. They should challenge you. But your goals should not be so big that you don't have an actual plan to get there. Break it down into quarters. Use

radical honesty and don't tell yourself little lies.

Take micro-steps toward success. These are small, consistent steps that you take day after day that you may or may not see results from immediately. But over time, with consistency, they are a pathway to success.

Chapter 3: Go: Relentless Execution

It's wonderful to speak of mottoes and mantras, but results are what get you over the finish line. Relentless execution is what bridges the gap between "trying" and "results."

To be relentless is to keep going, no matter what, without stopping or easing up. It's never giving up. And it also usually implies a very high level of intensity. The other half of this concept is execution. In other words, you can't be all talk, no action. If you build on each chapter of this book, you have goals and a plan. Now you have to pursue the goal and execute that plan without giving up.

Get in touch with qualities and traits that are the building blocks of success. These include grit, determination, erasing the shortcut mindset, persistence, work ethic, and discipline. Goals and habits go hand in hand. Self-assessment keeps your habits in check. Assess how hard you have worked or how you did with your commitment to work out each day before work. Track your data and track it closely. This ensures you can see when you are slipping and when you can celebrate your wins. Remember, excuses are a sorry way of accepting personal responsibility. So, stay in the No Excuses Zone throughout your journey toward success.

Chapter 4: Be a Fighter

Inside every one of us is a fighter. Being a fighter doesn't mean coming out wildly swinging and aggressively confronting every situation. Being a fighter is about analyzing the situation and figuring out who, what, and why you are fighting – and then applying all your energies to the correct challenge. Know yourself first and foremost because you are the number one factor in whether or not you are successful. Next, know who or what you are fighting. If the fight is still with you, it's important to make sure you are doing all the things needed to set yourself up for success. If you realize your fight is actually with your position, company, or leader and you know you cannot effect the change you need, then it's time to move on.

You need to know why you are fighting. Everything else is noise. Focus is one of the keys to being a fighter. Before you go up in arms with something, pull out your goal list – which is supposed to have just three focused foals. Is whatever you are about to fight for on that list? No? Move on. Your why is your motivation.

A great way to stay motivated is to gamify the process. For instance, you can "reward" yourself with a fifteen-minute (timed) social media break for every solid hour of calls. You can even set bigger rewards – like a quick vacation if you hit all your sales goals. Know that there is no magic wand or a magic career fairy to push your career along. Goals must be wed to your fight – and you must be consistent. When it seems like everything is falling apart, start drilling it down. Ask yourself, "What's the biggest problem?" Focus on that when the going gets tough. "Swipe left" should be your favorite thing to do. When you focus on the one right thing, it doesn't matter what is swimming around you.

Chapter 5: Critical Thinking Is Underrated: Taking Time to Think

We can define critical thinking as "a kind of thinking in which you question, analyze, interpret, evaluate, and make a judgment about what you read, hear, say, or write. Good critical thinking is about making reliable judgments based on reliable information. The two parts of critical thinking involve:

- A set of information and belief generation and processing skills
- The habit, based on intellectual commitment, of using those skills to guide behavior.
- To train yourself to be a critical thinker, here are the steps you can follow:
- Identify what problem you are trying to solve so you know where and what resources you should seek for information
- Gather and study your data, including industry figures and trends.
- Analyze and evaluate the data to keep track of your progress.
- Weigh your opinion or decision.
- Determine your action stops. Now that you have a decision, how are you going to carry it? What are you going to do with it?

While you may not stay at the same company from the time you enter your professional career, critical thinking skills, however, follow you from position to position.

Chapter 6: The Winning Formula

People change, the market changes, the types of people you're leading change, new technologies come out. But the formula for success in sales and business remains the same. People are the foundation of your winning formula. Understanding the talent that you have in place and analyzing their assets – who has what gifts, and what needs to be developed – is essential. From there, you need to figure out what to subsequently do to adjust your levels upward.

Once you understand the role of those who surround you on your journey to success, it's time to approach your work dilemmas with the mindset of the four pillars. Start with choosing a problem or an aspiration. Now sit down and write out the elements of the four pillars:

- Data. What data do you need? Who do you need to gather it from? What trends does the data tell you? What does the data tell you historically?
- Competition. Who are your top three competitors? How are you going to compete against them? What are their weaknesses? What are yours?
- Addressable market. Define this for your product or service
- Breaks in the machine. Now is the time to analyze where your breaks are – so you can fix them. Are you the weak link? Is there something holding you back that you need to address?

Chapter 7: Stick to Your Strategy: When the Going Gets Tough, the Tough Stick with It

I'm here to tell you that nothing ever goes completely smoothly, no matter how much scheduling, planning, manifesting, dreaming, or pushing you do. But the truth of life is that your strategy will save you.

Come out of the gate strong. If you don't start right away with the changes you want to make to get it together, and you don't execute in the first three months of the year, the rest of your year is done, end of story. The same holds true for your personal goals and strategy. Don't wait until you're in trouble. Check your goals daily, keep your strategy in mind, adapt, and make changes as circumstances change. Don't hesitate to have difficult conversations. Achieving your goals may mean hard conversations with your kids, partner, parents, roommate, or even boss. Remember, one of the most important pieces of your strategy is knowing when you're not following your strategy. That's why you need an accountability partner.

Chapter 8: Working through the Pain: Failure Is Only a Lesson

What is your relationship with failure? Failure can be our teacher and motivator. It can also decimate us if we let it. When we view failure through the lens of "nothing good will ever happen again," we give failure monster stature, making it look much bigger. The fact though, is, that it's a no for now, not forever.

Remember, just because you had a piece of cake, doesn't mean you go and eat the whole cake. Don't turn a little failure into an enormous one. Time your pity party. Sure, it's OK to feel sorry for yourself, to be bitterly disappointed, to be crushed. But glossing over your pain will not help you. Instead, throw a pity party, and allow yourself to feel what you feel for a little while. But once the alarm goes off, it's time to picture yourself shaking it off.

Most of us try to make our lives look so easy – and meanwhile, we're pulling our hair out from stress. We all need to be a lot more honest. When we reveal our actual truth, when we are vulnerable, we're actually helping the world in a positive way by showing others that we all have a hard time, or we need a helping hand from time to time.

Conclusion: Now That You've Got It Together, Get Ready for Big Results

Do you feel like you're starting to get it together? Are you focusing on your three goals for the current quarter? If you've written them down, bravo. Are you swiping left on anything that does not get you to your goals? Are you figuring out the brakes in your machine – and how to fix them?

It has been an honor and a privilege to take this journey with you. I wish every single reading of this book helps you achieve nothing but the greatest success.



Puja Bhola Rios is the CRO for Frame.io, the world's premier video review and collaboration platform. She is the author of *Get It Together,* a Forbes Books release , and a speaker tearing down excuses in audiences across the country. Puja fought to the top of her field. As an executive, she has a proven track record in both acquisitions and growing existing businesses. A passionate problem solver, Puja's career is defined by her results-oriented approach a characteristic that permeates every aspect of her life.

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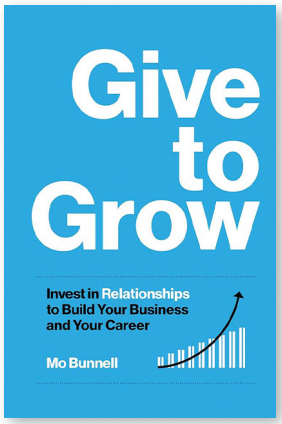
Give to Grow

Mo Bunnell

Executive Book Summaries®

Give to Grow

Invest in Relationships to Build Your Business and Your Career



by **Mo Bunnell**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Every profession has systems for learning how to Do the Work with excellence: degrees, designations, training classes, mentoring, and heck, just doing the work makes you better at Doing the Work. But it's rare to teach Winning the Work. And when something does exist, it's usually too little or doesn't feel right. In ***Give to Grow: Invest in Relationships to Build Your Business and Your Career***, you'll learn how focusing on growth really does help clients. Every other important business process has a common system. Growth should too. A common playbook helps everyone accomplish more, faster.

Give to Grow will show you how to develop relationships where everyone wins, including you. Your clients will win because together you'll drive positive change. Your teams will win because they'll be busy doing the work they were meant to do. And you'll win because you'll be in control of your career, doing the work you want for the clients you want. And when you do that, you'll make the impact you want. Everyone winning is always the winning move.

IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY:

- Learn long-term business success built through meaningful and strategic giving.
- Grow from intentional, consistent actions that deepen relationships.
- Implement strategic giving focused on high-impact connections while maintaining boundaries.
- Master both Winning the Work and Doing the Work to balance priorities and achieving success.

Section One: The Truth

Relationships are the foundation of long-term business success. Giving is the fastest way to build relationships, and no matter what's happening, it's always your move to give in a meaningful way. Many people think getting great at growth is about making themselves successful, but a deeper meaning comes from making others successful.

The biggest predictor of success is relationships.

The Top Performers focus on long-term relationships, always creating wins for everyone involved. And focusing on wins for everyone is what transforms Winning the Work from something to dread to something that's fun. Accumulating knowledge and skills matter, but your relationships will determine your ultimate success and ceiling.

Get great at both Winning the Work and Doing the Work mindsets. The skills are different, so you'll want to learn both. And you'll want to master the ability to know which one is needed at a given time and quickly switch modes between them.

Because the mindsets and moves are completely different, it can help to batch your Doing the Work and Winning the Work into separate, larger time blocks when possible.

Keep your focus and actions on the long-term relationship. Those actions will stack up over time, creating an unstoppable relationship advantage.

Relationship success isn't random. Strategic Givers focus their giving on the most important relationships that can meaningfully help them. Focus your investments toward higher potential payoffs.

At the same time, Strategic Givers give without expecting anything in return. Give without keeping score. Strategic Givers help others as much as possible but box in their time to create boundaries.

When you focus on relationships, growth isn't random — it's reliable.

Strategic Givers win more, win more often, and win bigger engagements.

The best invest in what and who has the highest payoff, do so with no expectation of any specific return, and say no to everything else.

Give to Grow is a mindset. It is strategically and consistently giving so you can exponentially grow your impact over time. You have to intentionally focus on getting great at giving and growing.

A great deal might make your year, but a great relationship can make your career.

Top Performers typically achieve 10x or more than the average performer. The biggest difference between Top Performers and everyone else is that they treat growth strategies and actions as their highest priority.

There's a system for growth, just like there's a system for delivery. It's learnable. It's predictable. And it's scalable.

Here's how Give to Grow will teach you to be a Top Performer:

First, Lose the Lies.

The lies we tell ourselves are the worst, because there's no one else to tell us they're false.

Here's the good news…and the truth: Client retention and growth is a learnable skill.

Section Two: The Lies

Most people think their biggest worry should be their competition and what they're doing. It's not. Your biggest worry should be you and what you're doing — or not doing.

Let's start with the biggest lie: I can't do that.

The Solution

Learn to see the lie "I can't." Reframe your brain to say, "I can't yet." Make a plan to improve. Get an expert to guide you if it's important.

Here's the next lie to lose: I'm not sure what to do.

The simple solution: It's always your move, and there's always a way to be helpful. If you don't know what the client wants, ask them.

This next lie is: I might do it wrong. The solution for this lie is asking for help. But this is much harder than it appears.

People overestimate how many people they need to ask to get help while underestimating how much help they'll get! Remember this when asking for help: the deepest relationships are mutually beneficial. Others want to help you. Getting comfortable asking for advice unlocks relationship and business success.

You're rarely rejected in the Doing of the Work, and you need to get used to rejection in the Winning the Work. Rejection is part of the deal.

The "I'm too busy" lie: Here's the mindful mantra for this little liar: The best time to grow is when you're busiest. The number one thing that signals your expertise is the scarcity of your time, and you should leverage being busy to help, not hurt, your future self.

One word summarizes integrating Doing the Work and Winning the Work: priority.

Top Performers prioritize their Winning efforts by consistently doing little things that keep the process moving forward. Little efforts done consistently are more effective than much larger efforts done inconsistently.

Don't let this lie in. And if it sneaks its way in, don't let it win. It's the fear of looking bad.

You're rarely rejected in the Doing of the Work, and you need to get used to rejection in Winning the Work. Rejection is part of the deal.

First, accept that you sometimes fear looking bad.The fear of looking bad dislikes action, hates momentum, and absolutely abhors acceleration.

Think 10x, not 1x. 10x thinking means "If I add value ten times, something will resonate at some point." Making more attempts is another main reason Top Performers separate themselves from everyone else.

Section Three: The Gifts

Now that we've removed the lies from your mind, we can add the gifts you'll give others.

Here are the four gifts:

1. Focus on Engagement: The Gift of Attention
2. Fall in Love with Their Problem: The Gift of Understanding
3. Give Them the Experience of Working with You: The Gift of Wisdom
4. Always Make a Recommendation: The Gifts of Clarity and Progress

Focus on your client's engagement so you can interact with the client in a way they love and they'd love to continue. Conversations with your clients should be an enjoyable and productive two-way conversation, where each side emerges a little more energized and a little better off.

There are three main things clients might need from you in a given interaction: technical advice, emotional support, and strategic ideas.

During every meeting, just ask yourself this simple question: Do they need help or a hug?

Fall in love with their problem so you can find a meaningful way to help them. And focus on asking questions and understanding their answers. Clients feel when they're being sold to. And they also feel when someone's digging in and trying to understand the problem.

Let this guide you during your meetings: What should I ask next to understand their priorities in their own words?

Design Your Initial Questions to Be Enjoyable to Answer

People love sharing their personal perspective. Your best questions are going to make it clear you want someone's personal perspective on something. You want to add supportive comments as others share their perspectives.

Another benefit of personal perspective questions is that it makes you more likable. Here are the three magic words to base your follow-up questions on: "Tell me more."

Paraphrasing earns you the right to continue, and it is the only way the prospect knows you get their situation.

There are two things that will tell you it's your turn.

First, the client might feel enough curiosity that they turn the light back on you. The second way is by prompting it yourself.

Clients want you to tailor what you know to their unique

situation. They want your understanding. They want you to get it. They want you to fall in love with their problem.

Hearing about something isn't the same as experiencing it. Give them the experience of working with you so that hiring you is a safe and simple next step.

Invest in Client Success with a Give to Get

Give to Grow is a mindset, something that will guide your growth for decades. A Give to Get is a discrete offer of help, almost like a small project performed at no charge as an investment in the client relationship. It drives specific value, an outcome you can discuss and document. It has an end date. It involves specific people.

All great Give to Gets have three things in common:

- They have immense value, so the client wants to say yes.
- They're worth the effort for you.
- They lead to a significant next step.

You want to design the Give to Get experience like this: invest just enough that the client sees they need you and it's a safe, simple next step to hire you.

The investment of a Give to Get will differentiate you, and how you offer it can too.

- Make the client feel special.
- Paraphrase the client's problem.
- Anchor on value.
- Be transparent about the vision.
- Offer with maximum chance of a yes.

To choose the best Go-To Give to Get, start by thinking backwards. What Big Win do you want to create more of?

You always need to make a recommendation.

Making a recommendation is the right thing to do, is what the client wants, speeds everything up, and doing it the right way helps the decision-maker. Then, after you make the recommendation, you want to engage the client to see what they think and solicit their improvement ideas.

Here's the most powerful factor in getting from one meeting to the next: a cliffhanger. Cliffhangers add excitement to buying. They're unresolved topics that everyone is looking forward to resolving in the next interaction.

Make your recommendations simple, valuable, and easy.

How you word recommendations makes all the difference.

Here are two ways to word a recommendation:

Authority-based recommendation:

"This has been an engaging conversation. Based on my experience, I'd recommend we…" This puts the power in you because you're the authority, with you giving your expert recommendation.

Social Proof-based recommendation:

"This has been a great discussion, with many similarities to what we've seen with other organizations like yours. What most of our clients do next is… "

Your recommendation is where all the leverage is, so you'll want to get it right and anticipate every permutation of the conversation after you give it. Bonus: practicing your recommendation and what will happen afterwards will give you more confidence, too.

When talking through your recommendation with the client, you actually don't want the yes. You want the truth. So, if there's a no, you want to know it as soon as possible. You want the client to make a decision. A fast yes is great. A fast no is great. Above all else, avoid the Slow No.

After you give your recommendation, be passionately agnostic. Be passionate that your recommendation is the right one and that you can help the client. And at the exact same time… Be agnostic as to whether they take you up on your recommendation. Being passionately agnostic is attractive. The fastest path to a yes is making it clear someone doesn't have to say yes.

Ask for Escalating Commitments

Closing happens in small, safe steps with escalating commitments throughout the buying process, not as some big magical leap at the end. Someone not good at closing is someone not good at asking for escalating commitments.

Section Four: The Impact

Almost everything in your daily life is going to try to distract you from deepening relationships.

Top Performers prioritize people. They raise up relationships. And they find ways to do so no matter what comes their way.

> Good or bad news, fast or slow progress, it's always your move. And the move is always to deepen the relationship.

Good or bad news, fast or slow progress, it's always your move. And the move is always to deepen the relationship.

Bad news will impact us harder, hit faster, and stick around longer than we think. This is why we need a special mindset to succeed in the moment.

The faster we can recognize we're being negatively impacted by negative news, the faster we can act positively.

The more you fixate on something you can't control, the more likely you'll slow down and get stuck. That's why you have to detach yourself from the outcome and attach yourself to your next action.

Top Performers make quick mental transitions. They feel all the things everyone else does, but they make faster transitions to act with agency. Whether they feel something is good or bad, they swiftly move from feelings to positive action, always moving forward.

Example Moves That Succeed in the Moment: Your Get an Introduction

These are more important than they appear, because the strongest thing someone can do for you is recommend you. Ask: What can I do to inspire confidence that the introducer should introduce me again? You want to over communicate with the introducer throughout the process.

Let's say you started a first-time meeting with a prospect, and you set up the beginning frame nicely. After that, it can sometimes be hard to tell if it's going well or not, and your feelings can take over.

Detach yourself from the outcome and focus on engagement. What question should you ask next? What do you need to learn to test your understanding of their priorities in their own words? Once you know that, what offers of helpfulness can you make that leverage your knowledge and network?

If someone doesn't respond to an outreach, remember that sometimes you win, and sometimes you learn.

If someone does respond to an outreach - great! But don't just be happy - accelerate. Ask: What can I do to deepen the relationship?

If you get a "no" for a Give to Get? No biggie. Think of this positively. You got an answer. They made a decision. You avoided the Slow No. There's some interesting science called "rejection then retreat." You'll set yourself apart when you strive to continue to invest after a no. And you have an outsized chance of a yes if you do.

If you get a yes for a Give to Get - double down! This is a chance to deepen the relationship. What's one little extra you can offer right after the yes?

If they tell you "they have someone for that" - don't just scurry off. Instead, give. Continuing to try sends a strong signal about how great a partner you are.

If you lose something big, first and foremost, ask for a debrief call. Most people don't.

There's always a way to deepen the relationship, and it's your job to find it. Doing this will separate you from the outcome you can't control and turn your focus to the winning move you can control.

Finish Strong

The only way you can feel good about the week is if you define a finish line before you start. This requires writing things down or having an electronic system to define and track your progress.

Start with Focusing on the Right People

Your expertise is vitally important, but your overall future success will be capped by the quantity and quality of your relationships. You need a prioritized list of relationships because if you try to keep up with everyone, you'll keep up with no one.

Relationships are your long-term game and the most important to focus on, but you'll also want to write down your opportunities. Your Opportunity List should cover each thing you need other people to say yes to.

Choose Three Big-Impact Activities Each Week

Write them down and schedule time on your calendar to do them. That's it!

These three things will keep you on track, always making progress toward your goals:

1. Choose your MITs (Most Important Things) based on the highest long-term impact.
2. Flex your effort to fit your capacity.
3. Stay consistent.

How to succeed in the long term involved three levels of Top Performance:

Level One: Growing a Book of Business

Someone making it to Level One has built a solid, repeatable book of business large enough to earn their own keep.

Level Two: Growing a Team

Someone at Level Two is now leading a team of people striving to be at or already at Level One.

Level Three: Growing at Scale

This is the highest level because it scales indefinitely. The Top Performer making it to this level has added a new skill—finding and mentoring Level Two leaders with scalable systems.

What got you here won't get you there. This is important — each stage requires learning brand-new skills. This leads us to… Elite Top Performers don't stop when they build their own book of business.

How to Get to Where You Want to Go: Cut to Climb

No matter where you're at, there's another level of impact. Autopilot is your enemy. You have to remind yourself to subtract or you won't do it.

Here's your Cut to Climb system:

- Schedule a recurring quarterly meeting with yourself or your team.
- Map out what you want to focus on in the next quarter and how long it will take.
- Cut that amount of time from your existing responsibilities.

Successful Givers know how to say no so they don't get burned or burn out. Advocate for yourself: say yes to less.

Think in Bets: Think BIG, Start Small, Scale Up

Prioritize your investments based on your expected payoff. Think big so you have high upside, but start small so you hedge your risks. Double down only when something works, scaling up your investment with certainty.

The biggest impact you'll have is helping others win. Your expertise doesn't just impact the people you interface with day to day, it helps both them and broad swaths of their organization.

Give to Grow is powerful on its own, but it's even more powerful when scaled across a group. Working through all you've learned with a team will give everyone a deeply bonding experience, better ideas, leveraged strategies, better teamwork, improved action plans, and even shared accountability so everyone can keep making positive progress.

Give to Grow offers a transformative approach to personal and professional success by centering relationships and generosity as the foundation for growth. By focusing on deepening relationships, adopting a mindset of continuous learning, and mastering the balance between Winning the Work and Doing the Work, you can not only achieve your goals but also elevate the success of those around you.

Growth is not random — it's intentional, reliable, and scalable when rooted in meaningful connections and deliberate actions. Success isn't about individual wins; it's about building trust, creating value, and leaving a legacy of strong, impactful relationships. It's always your move — make it meaningful.



Mo Bunnell helps complex organizations grow by scaling business development skills and creating a growth-oriented culture. He's the founder of Bunnell Idea Group (BIG) and the author of The Snowball System. BIG has trained tens of thousands of professionals at hundreds of organizations. Mo lives in Atlanta, Georgia.

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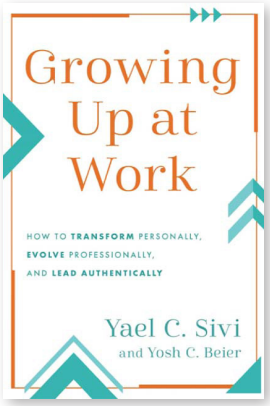
Growing Up at Work

Yael Sivi and Yosh Beier

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Executive Book Summaries®

Growing Up at Work

How to Transform Personally, Evolve Professionally, and Lead Authentically



by **Yael Sivi and Yosh Beier**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The workplace can be the source of tremendous growth and satisfaction, as well as the source of tremendous anxiety, frustration, and fear. But through this frustration and fear, we can find our greatest potential if we're willing and able to seek out opportunities fro growth. ***Growing Up at Work*** covers a list of unique areas where we often face common challenges at work, as well as actionable practices we can use to turn them to our advantage. From fear-inducing bosses to difficult conversations we'd rather avoid, by *Growing Up at Work* using the methods found here, you can become more effective, inspiring, and authentic in any workplace.

Do you feel like an imposter at work? Do you enjoy your work but feel like the rest of your life is devoid of meaning? Do you often find yourself feeling fearful or intimidated by a superior or coworker? This book provides you with step-by-step instructions and practices to help you overcome them and make your career a source of fulfilment and positive transformation.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to become an emotionally mature leader and create healthy employees, teams, and organizations.
- How to achieve authentic, positive leadership growth through self-awareness and openness to growth.
- How to take command of anxiety, insecurity, and fear in the workplace.
- How to realize extraordinary result if you choose to grow from the inside out.

Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries® (ISSN 0747-2196), 225 Wilmington West Chester Pike, #2, Chadds Ford, PA 19317 USA. • Copyright ©2022 by Soundview, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited. • Subscriptions start at $99/year. To subscribe, visit summary.com. • January 2022 • Order #44SS01B Meghan P. Kozak, Editor-in-Chief • Kylie Waytuck, Graphic Designer

Introduction

In all of our work, we are constantly reminded that changing behavior on the surface, while sometimes effective, is often not sustainable. It's our belief and experience that the deepest and most meaningful change comes from the inside out. When we closely examine and shift our behaviors and patterns, transformation is possible.

For transformation to occur, we must grow and change. This takes time-and sustained practice. Using in-depth client stories as a way to illustrate what integrated personal and professional growth looks like, we portray this process realistically and in ways that we hope will encourage you to do your own work.

In this book summary, you'll find the following:

1. Lifelong practices for personal transformation and professional evolution that we introduce to clients and that you can bring into your own life.
2. Theories and concepts underpinning our coaching approach, which centers around Gestalt therapy, a humanistic form of psychotherapy grounded in the present moment experience of the client and the therapist, as well as Adult Development Theory, a model that describes how our consciousness can evolve in adulthood.

I Feel Like an Imposter

Everyone sometimes feels like they don't belong or haven't earned their spot. Here are some practices to try if you ever find yourself feeling this way.

Distinguish your thoughts from your feelings. If you're feeling bad, stop and investigate the story you're telling yourself.

Come back to the present. Name what you're seeing, feeling, hearing, tasting. Get back into your body. Exercise or meditate, whatever it takes to get you out of your head.

If you become aware of your inner critic, practice becoming aware of your critical voice and also practice standing up to your critic. Journaling can be a great tool for this, and you can do it as if you're writing dialogue between two different characters.

Say kind words to yourself on a daily basis. Talk about what you appreciate about yourself. Practice talking to yourself the way you would talk to somebody you love. You can do this in a mirror, in a journal, or by looking at a picture of yourself at a younger age.

Take five minutes to talk to yourself out loud about the things you appreciate about yourself. Write down how you feel afterward.

I'm Their Manager, But I Want to Be Their Friend

If you're a manager, track how you spend your time in and outside of work with the people who work for you. In general, it should be equitable across the whole team. Be consistent when connecting with people— asking them about their weekends, for example. Keep in mind that how you spend your time is always sending messages, whether you realize it or not.

Speak about other people as if they are in the room with you. Gossip is never helpful and almost always has the potential to harm. If you need to vent or process something, find a trusted peer or advisor or coach to talk with— not the people who report to you.

It can sometimes help to put yourself mentally in the position of your team— what would they want from you? What behaviors would they expect and need? Are you delivering those? Try making decisions from a place of fairness. Consider whether your feelings about people and your relationships with them might be affecting your decision-making or judgement.

I Take Care of Everyone Except Myself

Take feelings of guilt and resentment as useful signposts: When chronically felt, they almost always point us to ways in which we are being confluent with others.

Practice setting boundaries before you think you should. This is similar to stopping work before you are tired. There is lag time, and you are not practiced in resting boundaries to protect you brown time, energy, and well-being.

Think of it as putting on your own proverbial 'air mask' before you help others with theirs. If you are feeling drained, tired, or ambivalent about offering your help or taking care of others, start by meeting your own needs first— and then see where you land.

In general, practice saying 'No' more often— at home and at work. You can say it with love and with kindness, but you can still say it. Practice not volunteering for so many things and see how that feels. If you feel agitated, that is

natural—practice tolerating your discomfort before doing something about it.

I'm Just Not Good Enough

Practice not just reacting to your negative self-talk, but pausing enough to discern and to listen to what that self-talk is saying. When you hear a negative voice in your head, work to replace it with words that feel more supportive to you. If it's hard for you to do this, imagine the most loving person in your life— real or imagined— saying affectionate and supportive things to you. What would they say? Don't rush this. Feel how you are affected by these words. Do this as regularly as you can.

Practice self-care and do things to create ease and relaxation for yourself. Some of us are just not practiced at feeling relaxed. Consider these ideas: Get a massage, take a hike, enjoy a nice meal. Remind yourself what joy, fun, and relaxation feel like.

I Know I Should Address This Conflict, But I Don't

When you find yourself avoiding conflict, try to articulate to yourself: What is the story I'm telling myself about having this conversation? If I do it, what do I think will happen? How likely is that?

If you're a manager or leader, practice what it's like to express yourself as directly as possible without disclaimers, caveats, or indirectness. Find an accountability partner at work to help remind you of your intention sand to practice with when you need the support.

Use feedback tools to support you in speaking truthfully and thoughtfully in a way that will get you closer to what you want.

If you're really worried, experiment with having a difficult conversation through role-playing with a coach or friend.

I Don't Want to Play Politics

Some of us simply don't want to speak up because we don't want to 'take sides.' But this can be a damaging mindset if taken to an extreme.

Practice speaking truth with care. This means that you don't have to share every thought in your head, and you don't need to cushion the blow so much that people don't actually understand what you're saying. Speaking truthfully means we discern what's important for us to say and what we would regret not saying.

Practice showing up in your work interactions from a place of trust versus fear. Ask yourself: What would I say right now if I weren't scared? How could I say that thing clearly and with care for others? Practice communicating from a place of pleasing yourself versus pleasing others. It can be helpful to rehearse difficult conversations in advance.

People Think I'm a Jerk

Do you feel that despite your best efforts, you come across negatively to the people around you at work? There are some practices you can try to work through this.

Daily journaling is an excellent means of accelerating self-awareness and helping you change what needs to be changed.

Read articles and books that can help you step outside of yourself. Leadership and Self-Deception, by the Arbinger Institute, can be extremely insightful. Other helpful resources include The Fearless Organization by Amy Edmondson and information about Project Aristotle on the Google website.

Approach interactions with positive intentions. Plan ahead for being intentional, kind, and collaborative. Listen more than you speak, and realize that in conversation we tend to be in either inquiry mode or advocacy mode. Inquiry mode brings people closer. Advocacy mode can sometimes push others away.

People Don't Trust Me

If you find that you're not a trustworthy presence at your workplace, start by reflecting on these questions:

How well do the people around me know me?

How much do i allow them to know me?

How well do i know myself?

Is there any unresolved grief, pain, or trauma from my past or present that I am 'managing" each day so that I don't feel it?

Is that grief, pain, or trauma expressing itself in other ways?

How do I show up to people in different context? Do my friends know me as the same person that my colleagues know? Am I hiding or 'shape-shifting' in any of these spaces?

What kinds of relationships do I want to cultivate at work?

When someone reaches out to you for advice or guidance, seize the opportunity. Make sure you are genuinely there for them. Meanwhile, you may want to work with a therapist or coach to deal with any unresolved trauma or grief in your past; it is almost impossible to do this on your own.

I'm Successful, But I Have No Life

Be honest with yourself. Assess how satisfied you are across different areas of your life (e.g. friendships, hobbies, personal growth, health, career, etc.) and talk to a friend or coach about your scores. This is also called the Wheel of Life exercise. Are your scores OK with you? Is this the life you want to live? What scores do you wish were higher? What would that life look like?

What trade-offs are you making? Are you OK with them? What tweaks could you make to be more in balance with yourself?

Keep coming back tot he question of what success means to you— not anyone else. Write down your operating instructions for being happy. Compare that list to how you're actually spending your time. Is there enough overlap for you?

I Have to Be Perfect

Perfectionism can have many causes, but there are three routes that can help us break out of it. Perfectionists fear that if they do anything less than perfectly, they will not be able to live with themselves and their self-esteem will take a terrible blow.

Here are some ways to break out of a perfectionist mindset.

Practice doing things imperfectly

Set yourself a time limit for any task. When your time is up, stop what you're doing and consider how you feel

Try telling your colleagues that you fear you may be a perfectionist and you want to approach things differently in the future

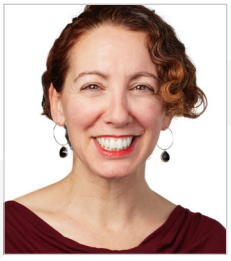
In your interactions at work, try using suggestive language: "What if we tried…" "I wonder what would happen if we…"

I'm Scared of My Boss

If you find yourself often entering into a Child state of fear relating to your boss, take a moment to become aware of it next time it happens. Breathe, and try to pivot into what your inner adult would do or say.

If necessary, take a walk or ask for a moment to collect yourself. Your inner child should not be running a meeting, having a difficult conversation, or trying to lead a team.

As a professional and as a leader, practice communicating, managing, and leading from the psychic space of your Adult state. If you don't know what that means, ask yourself: What does the wisest, most mature part of myself feel and think right now?





Yael Sivi is a consultant and executive coach with over 12 years experience working in Fortune 1000 companies and public sector/governmental agencies. Her focus is on helping leaders and teams create environments that promote engagement and growth.

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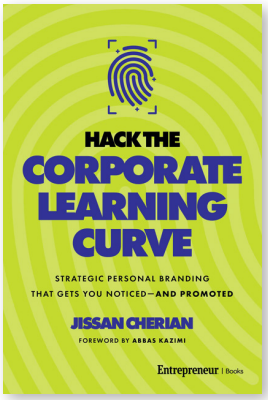
Hack the Corporate Learning Curve

Jissan Cherian

Executive Book Summaries®

Hack the Corporate Learning Curve

Strategic Personal Branding That Gets You Noticed—And Promoted



by **Jissan Cherian**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

A growing number of professionals work harder each year, yet feel increasingly invisible. Promotions slow, recognition feels uneven, and career paths become less predictable as companies restructure and reduce traditional development programs. Even strong performers can feel stuck, unsure how decisions are really made or why others advance faster. The core frustration is a lack of control over visibility, trajectory, and how one's value is perceived inside a large organization.

Hack the Corporate Learning Curve: Strategic Personal Branding That Gets You Noticed—And Promoted offers a practical response to that uncertainty. The book argues that career growth now requires the same deliberate thinking companies apply to managing their brands, and provides frameworks, exercises, and real-world examples to help readers define an authentic personal brand, increase enterprise-wide awareness, and navigate the unwritten rules of advancement.

Drawing on his 20+ years of experience in marketing, consulting, and leadership development, author Jissan Cherian reframes career progression as a branding and influence challenge. According to Cherian, by understanding one's current "career persona" and applying targeted strategies, professionals can move with intention toward success rather than waiting for recognition to arrive.

IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY

- Learn how to take ownership of your personal brand rather than relying on corporate career planning
- Identify your current career stage using clear career personas that guide your next strategic career move
- Turn setbacks, reorganizations, and layoffs into repositioning opportunities
- Build sustainable influence that supports promotion and long-term career mobility

Introduction

The days of expecting and relying on corporations and bosses to manage and drive your career development are over. Whether we're just entering the corporate world or have decades of experience, the modern workplace's unpredictability is making it harder for us to feel that we are in control of our career trajectory.

In an environment where visibility is key and change is constant, taking control of your personal brand will put you back in the driver's seat of your career. Chances are you're navigating the corporate maze and asking yourself:

- How do I stand out?
- How do I grow?
- How can I make my mark if it seems there are unspoken rules to corporate success?

The short answer? You hack it.

Every year, companies spend millions of dollars curating and nurturing their corporate brands to ensure consumers love and cherish what the brand represents.

Why don't we, as the owners of our own personal brands, take the same meticulous steps to craft and build a compelling story of ourselves throughout our career—and shape how we're perceived along the way?

We are going to focus on the Five Personas of personal branding. These Five Personas build on each other, but you'll learn that movement within them can be fluid as your experiences, visibility, and roles change throughout your career.

Each persona is structured around four dimensions of strategic personal branding, with practical actions designed to build visibility, influence, and credibility at that stage:

- **Market awareness** – how to understand your organization's priorities, power structures, and key stakeholders, and expand your network accordingly
- **Consumer perception** – how to intentionally shape how others interpret your work, leadership presence, and potential
- **Brand strengths** – how to clarify, strengthen, and deploy your differentiators in a changing context
- **Marketing tactics** – the concrete moves that increase exposure, advocacy, and career momentum

These dimensions remain consistent across all five personas. What evolves is the level of sophistication and scale at which you apply them.

PERSONA 1

New Brand with No Market Awareness

Just like a new product launch needs to rapidly build awareness and trust with consumers, a new employee faces the challenge of strategically building their visibility and credibility within their organization.

They start with no existing network while also having to learn the unwritten rules to make a positive first impression. This is a critical stage in which their careers can either accelerate or stall, depending on how well they navigate it.

Market Awareness

1. Understand your company's enterprise priorities

One of the best places to start when trying to understand enterprise priorities is going back and reviewing the presentations at the start of the year, which are typically delivered by senior leaders in a town hall meeting. Take note of strategic priorities, focus areas, or capabilities the leadership team is expecting as critical enablers of success.

2. Understand your company's structure and decision-makers

Typically, companies signal who has decision-making authority by the number of resources, through head count or budget, that are allocated to certain departments. Over the first few months, pay close attention to the interpersonal relationships between the leaders of these areas.

3. Understand the critical stakeholders for your network

Start making a list of the specific stakeholders within your team or in other departments who will be crucial to the success of your projects. These stakeholders could be leaders with the authority to either approve or derail your project, depending on whether they are aligned with it.

Consumer Perception

1. Understand what your work style communicates nonverbally

In the early weeks of a new role, there will be limited opportunities to deliver financial performance, project deliverables, or significant business impact. Therefore, you need to focus on what your work style and everyday approach to office engagement communicate about you to others.

2. Understand what your questions communicate

My recommendation is to use public forums as an opportu-

> The reality is that your performance will be evaluated in comparison with those around you. ”

nity to ask questions that allow you to demonstrate relevant previous experiences or show your understanding of the broader enterprise context.

3. Volunteer for projects to learn by doing

As a new employee, it's easy to defer any extra work in favor of focusing solely on the projects you've been assigned. However, offering to take on additional responsibilities beyond your day-to-day duties not only signals to your manager that you're actively learning but also gives you more exposure to senior leaders and other individuals on your team.

Brand Strengths

1. Self-discovery

Building a personal brand begins with taking a comprehensive inventory of who you are, what you stand for, and what brings out the best in you at work. Before you can shape how others perceive your value, you need to define it for yourself. You can begin that process by:

- Identifying your natural strengths
- Validating your natural strengths
- Connecting your strengths to your work style

2. Organizational discovery

Once you've completed a comprehensive inventory of yourself, it's time to shift your focus externally and begin researching how your organization operates, particularly in terms of how talent is identified and nurtured.

Start by understanding how talent management works in your organization. Ask for the specific job description that was used to recruit for your role so you're clear on the skills framework guiding expectations. Then ask for concrete examples of what "meeting expectations" and "exceeding expectations" look like in practice. This clarity allows you to align your performance with how success is formally defined.

It's also important to understand your performance benchmarks. The reality is that your performance will be evaluated in comparison with those around you. To increase your chances of being promoted, focus on consistently demonstrating the skills and performance expected at the level above you—not just your current role.

Marketing Tactics

1. Volunteer for projects and initiatives

Actively listen for opportunities to volunteer for additional work, projects, or initiatives that allow you to showcase your capabilities. While it's important to show initiative, be careful not to take on more than you can handle, especially early in your role.

2. Contribute to discussions early and often

Too often, individuals new to an organization join meetings or large team discussions and hesitate to speak up. What they fail to realize is that the early days are the best time to ask. If you choose to keep quiet and avoid asking anything, you might unintentionally stand out in a negative way.

3. Build relationships with peers and colleagues

In the first few weeks of a new role, prioritize meeting individually with key stakeholders involved in the projects you're working on. Then expand your focus to include other team members and cross-functional colleagues who work closely with your group but not necessarily on the project you're managing.

4. Be physically present and visible in the hybrid work environment

It can be more difficult for newcomers to understand team dynamics and workplace culture in a hybrid setting. To stay visible, always turn your camera on when joining meetings remotely, and choose a seat where you can be seen when attending in person.

PERSONA 2

New Brand with High Market Awareness

An employee who starts to establish a track record of success will begin to attract new opportunities that tap into their potential and stretch their capabilities even further.

For the employee, it's a bit of a balancing act; they need to leverage their existing reputation and skills but also build new relationships and prove their value in a completely novel environment. It's all about showing confidence in what they

know while also being open and humble enough to learn the new systems and dynamics at play.

Market Awareness

1. Leverage your existing network to cultivate new connections

Reach out to your existing network and see who might be able to introduce you to fresh contacts within your new department. Another option is to use a social network app, such as LinkedIn, to see which connections you have in common.

2. Showcase your skill set by proactively supporting departments

Organizations often place high performers into new departments to help expand their skill sets and broaden their experiences. If this happens to you, take the time to see if you can still offer support to the departments you worked with before.

3. Navigate the perceived awkwardness of peers becoming your direct reports

As you build a track record of success, there's a high likelihood you may find yourself in a position where yesterday's coworkers and peers suddenly become today's employees and direct reports on your team. Many leaders experience this situation, and here are tried-and-true ways to manage the perceived awkwardness:

- Approach your team with humility and respect
- Set clear expectations while demonstrating active listening
- Remain approachable while maintaining professional boundaries

4. Prioritize identifying your senior mentor

If your organization hasn't already identified a mentor for you, this is an important stage in which you should request one or take the initiative to find one within the company. A mentor is usually someone who is further along in their career and took a career path similar to yours or what you aspire yours to be.

Consumer Perception

1. Shape your manager's perception

The perception of you within an organization isn't formed solely by the work you deliver; it's also influenced by how regularly and effectively you update your manager and how clearly you communicate the business impact of your work.

2. Build your thought leadership platform

In today's modern workplace, social media is no longer just a reflection of your personal life and relationships; it has become a platform where you can build and demonstrate thought leadership. Don't wait until you're in a senior-level role to begin building your social media presence. It's far more effective to build that identity gradually and consistently over time as you gain knowledge and experience in your career.

3. Mentor others to develop your people leadership

If you're meeting or exceeding expectations on your projects, mentorship is an excellent way to signal to the organization that you aspire to become a people leader in the future. Serving as a mentor helps others grow and provides you with a safe space to practice and refine your active listening and emotional intelligence and get valuable, real-time feedback for your mentoring skills.

Brand Strengths

1. Translate your natural strengths to new roles

What you will quickly learn as you progress through your career is that your natural strengths should organically fit into many different contexts and roles. Within the first 30 to 60 days of your new job, you should look to role model and specifically demonstrate your strengths in action as they pertain to your job. The goal is to gain early momentum and wins with your peers and manager by revealing that the strengths you bring to the role are driving performance.

2. Bridge skills gaps in a new role

Once you've identified your strengths, go back through the job description, noting or highlighting where you have clear skills gaps. Just to be clear, this is to be expected as the organization is moving you into new departments to accelerate your training and growth.

3. Develop storytelling to drive memorability

Begin creating and practicing the skill of effective storytelling. The goal is to create a small set of stories that showcase your strengths in action. Working on these stories and having them ready to leverage in various forums can help drive your memorability and credibility in the organization and tie your brand to your strengths.

4. Build compelling development plans

Most corporate roles ask employees to complete two important documents on an annual basis: a list of your business objectives and goals for the year and your employee develop-

> Focus on consistently demonstrating the skills and performance expected at the level above you—not just your current role.

ment plan. These developmental plans are important for an individual's career development. You are accountable for the quality and effectiveness of your development plan, even if your manager does not request or require it.

Marketing Tactics

1. Proactively improve your department or team processes

As you continue to deliver on the projects your manager assigns while also volunteering for enterprise opportunities, don't forget to take a step back and see if there are inefficiencies or broken processes that could be improved. Then offer to lead a team of associates to tackle improving them without being asked.

2. Identify high-potential emerging talent

By building early relationships with emerging talent in the organization, you create trust and credibility that may benefit you later in your career when you can put together your own teams. Think about this as having early access to people who see you as an early and influential mentor.

PERSONA 3

Established Brand Looking to Become a Market Leader

Many professionals reach a point in their careers at which they either stall or settle into middle management for the long term. However, if you're looking to move from middle management to a senior leadership role, there's an expectation that you'll need to step outside your comfort zone to go from good to great.

This is the point where your personal brand begins to extend beyond yourself. It starts to influence your team, your department, and the broader organization.

Market Awareness

1. Level up your network to enterprise stakeholders

Annually, executive leadership teams conduct a talent review focused on identifying and understanding the highest-potential employees who may be two to three levels below them. While these individuals may not yet be ready to step into executive leadership roles, those identified during this review represent the future leadership pipeline for the organization.

2. Establish internal thought leadership

Most companies have a department responsible for building skills and developing training frameworks across the organization. One way to elevate your organizational awareness and impact is by establishing internal thought leadership through this team.

3. Partner with HR on talent management initiatives

By volunteering to support HR on talent management initiatives, you not only deepen your relationship with a key stakeholder but also increase the likelihood that you'll be remembered and advocated for. It positions you as someone who is not only highly capable but also contributes meaningfully to the broader organization.

4. Build relationships with heads of cross-functional departments

This is important because it prepares you for the moment when you're assigned a high-profile project. If you encounter challenges on such a task, having a relationship with the head of a cross-functional department can be a game changer. It allows you to escalate issues and remove barriers more quickly and effectively.

5. Drive advocacy through a senior sponsor

A senior sponsor is typically an executive responsible for learning about your strengths, understanding your career aspirations, and positioning you for future roles in the company. Most importantly, this is the person who will advocate for you in rooms where decisions are made, and where you are not present.

Consumer Perception

1. Enter the organizational succession plan

If you are considered a high-potential employee within the organization, you may be included in succession planning. This means the company is thinking about your long-term future and where you could fit. In this situation, it's essential for you to communicate your own aspirations and where you see your long-term potential within the organization.

2. Establish your external thought leadership

Business leaders now have more opportunities than ever to own and amplify their personal platforms. Social media sites such as LinkedIn allow middle managers, senior leaders, and executives to share original content, celebrate organizational achievements, and shine a spotlight on the teams they lead, all in a public forum.

Here's how to strengthen your external presence:

- Update all relevant education and employment history so that your profile functions as a living résumé
- Seek recommendations from your network
- Consistently post original content that demonstrates your thought leadership or actively participate in discussions on relevant leadership topics

3. Become a talent magnet with high-potential employees

Your track record of being a leader who develops, motivates, and inspires will naturally position you as a talent magnet within the organization. You want to create an environment in which people on your team are so content that they don't want to leave, while at the same time, people from other teams are eager to work with you.

Brand Strengths

1. Build a team with complementary strengths

Once you've identified your top five natural strengths, you'll want to understand what blind spots this creates for you. This requires you to be highly self-aware to identify the type of individuals you should bring to the team to complement your skill set.

2. Level up storytelling to drive inspiration and folklore

Storytelling is used to help drive inspiration with your team and the wider organization. There are three types of stories that you should be prepared to inspire with, as these are the most common challenges a high-profile project could face:

- Delivering above and beyond expectations
- Navigating complex issues and risks
- Accomplishing something that's never been done before

Marketing Tactics

1. Drive business results and performance

There are many different leadership styles that can be effective in driving business results and performance. Ultimately, your company's culture will determine where you should fall on this spectrum in terms of your leadership style. That said, there are proven actions you can take to foster a high-performance culture, regardless of the specific leadership style you're employing:

- **Establish annual, quarterly, and monthly goals**. These quarterly goals help the team stay focused on the short-term deliverables needed to achieve the full-year results.
- **Track and hold your team accountable for delivering performance**. Create a scorecard that allows you to visually see whether or not key projects are on track or off in terms of delivering the quarterly results.

2. Define your team's values and culture

The best way to approach this is by holding a full-day team-building workshop that is focused on giving your team members a voice on what they believe this would look like when fully embedded and role-modeled. Every individual within your team should have a sense of ownership of the team culture and team values.

PERSONA 4

Established Market Leader Being Challenged

We shouldn't be surprised when our personal brands are challenged or battle-tested. In fact, we should welcome these moments, as they push us to grow, learn from failure, and ultimately, build an even stronger version of ourselves, one that reflects true resilience and grit.

The trust and credibility you've built over the years, the track record of success you've established, and the network you've nurtured will all become critical assets you can leverage during the process of building your personal brand.

Market Awareness

1. Invite your network to your brainstorming and ideation sessions

The reason we've been so intentional about building a network of stakeholders, mentors, coaches, and sponsors is that we can now leverage them as a sounding board for ideation and brainstorming. The individuals in your network believe in you and genuinely want to see you succeed. This has always been one of the most powerful assets to draw upon when facing a challenge.

> Your network becomes one of the most powerful assets you can draw upon when facing a challenge. ”

2. Turn your network into your internal public relations team

We should look at your network as the internal public relations team for your personal brand. You've likely spent years building the group, so its members have a deep understanding of your strengths and capabilities. They can reassure executive leadership within your company that you're not only equipped to handle the challenge but also capable of navigating it to a successful outcome. In many ways, they act as protectors of your personal brand.

3. Build relationships with emerging stakeholders or departments

If your personal brand begins to struggle because of a shifting market dynamic or business challenge, it's critical to evaluate whether your current network is equipped to support you or if it's time to expand it to include new voices and perspectives.

Consumer Perception

1. Cement your external thought leadership

The thought leadership you've built serves as a safety net if a business challenge becomes a career-limiting event and you're forced to explore external opportunities. You should be starting to publish original thought leadership content around two specific areas:

- Celebrating your team
- Sharing lessons learned

2. Understand how performance is being evaluated

Many professionals make the mistake of assuming they are meeting or exceeding expectations based on past benchmarks, not realizing that those standards may have evolved. When managing a complex project or navigating a significant business challenge, it becomes essential to establish a continuous feedback loop with your manager. You need to understand how you're performing in the current context, and more importantly, how leadership is evaluating you based on any new expectations that may arise.

3. Understand the positive signs of micromanagement

When most people hear the word *micromanagement*, they immediately associate it with a negative environment, one in which leaders closely monitor teams and decision rights may be taken away from the individuals responsible for running the team, organization, or business.

However, there are instances where micromanagement can actually be a positive signal.

If you want a micromanagement situation to be seen as a productive leadership technique, there are three key things you should do:

a. Set a clear and finite timeline for how long the micromanagement period will last
b. Define a clear business outcome or decision that must be reached by the end of this period
c. Avoid removing decision-making authority from your team during this time

Brand Strengths

1. Role model resilience and grit

When facing a highly complex business challenge, many different strengths must be leveraged, demonstrated, and role-modeled to achieve success. Two key elements essentially serve as superpowers in these situations: resilience and grit. They communicate adaptability under pressure, sustained perseverance, the ability to build credibility and trust, and the strength to inspire teams, which is as close to a superpower as you can get.

2. Reassess your team's readiness potential

When working on highly complex projects, your team's strengths, weaknesses, and readiness to tackle challenges will be under a microscope. The organization will expect you to have a pulse on your staff, not only when the project is going well but also when significant challenges arise.

3. Use forward-looking storytelling to inspire new heights

At this point, storytelling has become a forward-looking, visionary approach used to inspire your teams to reach new heights. The premise is simple: Speak as though you and your team have already succeeded. Describe to your team members how they will have specifically achieved something that once seemed nearly impossible. In doing so, you're creating a clear and compelling vision of the reality that must become true to succeed.

Marketing Tactics

1. Align stakeholder communication

One of the biggest challenges during complex business situations is the emergence of multiple competing versions of the same story: differing facts, conflicting opinions, and varied interpretations of what's happening, both within the team and in the market.

There are three specific actions a cross-functional team can take to minimize this risk:

a. Establish a single narrative
b. Use shared documentation instead of verbal updates
c. Appoint a central point of contact

2. Leverage your track record to maintain trust and credibility

As senior leaders assess whether you have the leadership skills to guide your team through the challenge, it's essential to consistently communicate your credibility and competence. Just as important, your network should reinforce that same trust and credibility on your behalf, especially in conversations where you are not in the room.

3. Ensure decision rights are at the correct level

While it may be tempting to assume that the most senior person should make all the calls, the reality is different. Decision rights should rest with the person closest to the issue at hand. Decisions should be made by those who are most knowledgeable about the subject and fully understand the implications.

PERSONA 5

Market Leader Becomes a Founder

Becoming a founder means believing there is something greater and more fulfilling worth pursuing, even if it requires harder work and longer hours in the short term than your corporate role demands. Once you make that connection, you can ask the next difficult question: Do I have intellectual property or thought leadership skills that would be valued in the marketplace as a standalone business?

Market Awareness

1. Turn your network into potential clients

Once you've made the decision to leave a company, you should proactively reach out to your network and share the news personally. Give them a bit of insight into your plans. This deepens the connection and gives your contacts a chance to think about how they might support you in your next chapter.

2. Leverage your network as your external public relations team

Early in your entrepreneurial journey, you likely won't have a public relations team to amplify your message as a founder and leader. However, you can ask your network to leave ratings, reviews, testimonials, or even impactful quotes to feature on your website.

3. Learn from your network's entrepreneurial experience

Another powerful way to leverage your network is by connecting with individuals who previously left your company to pursue a similar entrepreneurial journey. Each of them brings unique experiences, lessons learned, and potentially even missteps they can share to help guide you as you begin.

4. Segment your network into investors, advisors, and mentors

One of the final and arguably most valuable exercises when starting your entrepreneurial journey is to segment your network into three distinct groups: investors, advisors, and mentors. By segmenting your network members this way, you can more strategically leverage their support, whether it's financial backing, guidance and advice, or wisdom gained through experience.

Consumer Perception

1. Define your core consumer and niche audience

A very common mistake many entrepreneurs or founders make early in their journey is being too broad in how they define their target consumer. Instead, focus on your core expertise. Identify a specific niche audience you're best equipped to serve.

2. Develop your thought leadership and then give it away

When you first start building a presence online for entrepreneurship purposes, you have to keep in mind the long game. You should not expect to monetize your content from day one. In fact, you should feel comfortable providing your thought leadership content for free, especially in the early stages of your journey.

3. Build a three-tiered revenue model

Start by researching the pricing strategies and product offerings of your competitors. Take note of how they price their services, how many tiers they use, and what's included at each level.

4. Build a cyclical personal brand ecosystem

This may sound more complicated than it is, so don't be intimidated by the scope of the term ecosystem. All it really means is creating a deliberate, cohesive presence across two or three key online platforms, where your content allows your audience to move fluidly between them.

Brand Strengths

1. Handle early setbacks with resilience and grit

Many entrepreneurs hit roadblocks and choose to walk away from their dreams. That lack of resilience and grit can be the difference between building a strong, sustainable business and folding at the first real setback. One of the best ways to cultivate resilience and grit is by building a strong support system around you.

2. Stay informed about industry news and trends

One of the first revelations I had after leaving my corporate role to start my entrepreneurial journey was that I no longer had seamless access to the industry news and market trends. To stay informed, I decided to focus on attending one industry conference annually. Conferences offer significant value: access to a large network of attendees, multiple relevant topics, and opportunities to hear from expert speakers and panel discussions.

3. Develop a founder's origin story

Now is your chance to tell your own story: a narrative that embodies your personal brand. When someone reads your origin story, they should feel empathy, excitement, and a real connection to who you are.

4. Invest in continuing education and certifications

As you embark on your entrepreneurial journey, take a close look at your competitors. Are they pursuing continuing education, certifications, or courses to build expertise that resonates with your niche audience? If your competitors are doing this, it's a strong signal that they're trying to create a competitive edge and differentiate themselves from you.

Marketing Tactics

Balance short-term value with long-term equity opportunities

If you operate in a B2B environment, you may encounter companies that want to work with you but lack the cash flow to afford your services. In these cases, you'll have to evaluate carefully: Is this client right for you right now? If you're financially stable and believe in the vision and future success of the company, accepting equity can be an incredibly lucrative long-term opportunity.

Conclusion

The days of expecting and relying on corporations and bosses to manage and drive your career development are over. Employees should and will continue to make choices that are in the best interest of their career development, while companies continue to make decisions that are in the best interest of their bottom line.

The power of your personal brand has never been more important. It will be your trusted compass as you navigate the choppy oceans of the corporate world.

The reason why personal branding is often overlooked or not prioritized is that it can be incorrectly perceived as bragging or selfish. Fight that instinct.

You're building your brand because you want to be more than just a corporate commodity. In a world where employees are seen as replaceable and layoffs or reorganizations are profit levers, the individuals who have built a personal brand will be best positioned to maneuver through uncertainty.

If you stay within the organization, you will have a unique identity. If you are asked to leave, you will have a head start in finding your next role based on the personal branding investments you made in yourself. There's no downside.

Never forget:

Your work should be noticed.

Your story should be told.

Your brand should be nurtured.



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I Hate Job Interviews

Sam Owens

Executive Book Summaries®

I Hate Job Interviews

Stop Stressing. Start Performing. Get the Job You Want.



by **Sam Owens**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Interviewing is not easy. Getting competitive jobs requires going beyond surface-level interview tricks and diving deep into the mechanics of answering questions. In ***I Hate Job Interviews: Stop Stressing. Start Performing. Get The Job You Want***, you will learn how to answer any question that can be thrown at you, from introductory to behavioral to scenario to illegal to just plain wacky. You'll first learn what to do before the interview: how to structure your preparation, how to build your confidence, how to get the right information, how to position yourself for the job, and how to most effectively practice. Then you'll be taken through the nitty gritty of how to answer any question that can come your way.

The focus of this book is solely on answering job interview questions because the job interview is the most consequential part of your job search. Other items, such as résumés, are of secondary importance and can be learned rather quickly. But not the job interview. No one can show up and do it for you, so it should command most of your time and attention. After reading this book, you will love job interviews, and you'll love them so much that you can't wait for your next one because you are a well-oiled job interview machine. You will feel deep in your bones that you can get any job you want, knowing you have mastered a skill that will serve you well for the rest of your career.

IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY:

- Replace negative interview myths with empowering truths.
- Apply practical techniques to prepare thoroughly for interviews
- Embrace discomfort as an important part of the interview process.
- Learn effective research, practice, and positioning for job interviews.

Convince Your Harshest Critic. Believing in Yourself Changes Everything.

If you want your interviewer to believe in you, you must first believe in yourself. You must know deep in your bones that you are an excellent candidate and that you will do a fantastic job once hired. Confidence changes everything.

The way to feel confident that you are an excellent candidate is to be an excellent candidate, and the way to be an excellent candidate is to prepare more than anyone else.

Embrace these three principles that will build your confidence and serve as your preparation foundation for the rest of this book:

1. Take out your mental trash.
2. Embrace the suck.
3. Commit to ten hours.

Take out your mental trash.

You can't feed your mind negative thoughts and expect to build interview confidence. Some of these bad interview thoughts—BITs:

BIT one: Some people are natural-born job interviewers and others aren't.

Truth: Job interviewing is a learned skill, not a born trait.

BIT two: Job interviewing is only for extroverts. Introverts have a disadvantage.

Truth: Job interviewing success is for those who want it bad enough.

BIT three: I wasn't qualified for the job, and that's why I didn't get it. It had nothing to do with how I interviewed.

Truth: You are qualified. You were selected to interview after they looked at your résumé and decided you were qualified. The truth is that you likely didn't get the job because you didn't interview well enough.

BIT four: Most interviewers make up their minds in the first five minutes of the interview, so I don't need to prepare for the latter part of the interview.

Truth: A 2015 study lays this myth to rest. Research from The Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology showed that, in fact, 30 percent of interviewers make up their minds within the first five minutes of the interview, 52 percent make up their minds between five and fifteen minutes, and the rest make up their minds after that.

BIT five: The people who will interview me are experts at job interviewing

Truth: Hiring managers are usually not formally trained, and many have very little experience

BIT six: The best thing I could do is be myself

Truth: What does "be yourself " mean, anyway? Yes, be yourself—but be your best prepared self.

BIT seven: I don't know what questions I will be asked beforehand, so there's really no way to prepare.

Truth: Smart candidates have a really good idea of the question types they will be asked.

BIT eight: I'm not even sure if I want this job, so it's not worth my time to prepare for the interview.

Truth: Worry about that after you have a job offer.

Embrace the Suck

That is the difference between a great interviewee and everyone else. The great ones lean into the pain of their incompetence. They don't let doubt or insecurity or anything else derail them from doing what it takes to gain mastery. Whatever part of interview preparation sucks the most for you, if you discipline yourself and embrace the suck you can become excellent at it. And that excellence and enjoyment will give you the secret weapon of confidence in your interview.

Commit to Ten Hours

Nailing the interview is the accomplishment that makes all other career accomplishments possible. Is it possible to master interviewing in only ten hours? Absolutely. Here's how you should structure your time:

Research: three hours.

You need strong foundational knowledge of the company and position prior to going into the interview

Formulation: three hours.

In the formulation phase, you sit down with the job descrip-

It's practice that allows you to flow freely and allows you to improvise comfortably when needed.

tion, apply notes from your research, and craft your responses. You start by developing seven to ten power examples: specific instances in your life that demonstrate you are perfect for the job.

Practice: four hours.

This is the part of preparation where most people give up—practicing your responses out loud for four hours. It's practice that allows responses to flow freely and allows you to improvise comfortably when needed

Get Inside Information. Gaining an Easy Advantage.

Job interviewing is not like stock trading. When preparing for a job interview, getting information from those familiar with the company is not illegal. It's not even unethical. In fact, if done the right way, it's encouraged! It's a common part of job interview preparation that can not only help you prepare but also impress those at your target company.

You should spend most of your two hours of preparation talking to people instead of reading about the company online.

Never cold-call unless you absolutely have to. Use your network and your creativity to get a warm introduction.

When conducting an informational interview, make it REAL.

- Research: read about the company and the person as you formulate your questions.
- Express sincere appreciation by thanking your new friend and mentor.
- Ask relevant questions that you are genuinely interested in, that pertain to the job description, and that your contact is uniquely qualified to answer.
- Listen actively; make the conversation enjoyable and productive by validating responses and reading the room.

Never leave the conversation without asking, "Is there anyone else you can think of whom I should speak with?"

Craft Power Examples. Positioning Yourself for the Job.

Positioning should play a critical role in your next job interview. As part of your preparation, you must practice positioning yourself by carefully studying the job description, developing your power examples, and planning how you overcome gaps in your skills and experiences.

You start the positioning process by studying the job description and identifying the skills and experiences required for the job, paying special attention to the first three to five skills or experiences listed.

Next, you create at least three power examples for each skill you identify. Power examples are instances where you demonstrated those skills.

Strong power examples:

- are relevant to the job description; and
- are tangible and specific.

In cases where your experience isn't a direct match with the required skills, bridge your skills by taking seemingly unrelated experiences and making them applicable to the job description.

Practice With Humans. Accelerating Your Performance.

The best way to master job interviewing is to do it. The discomfort and frustration wrought by practicing job interviews is exactly what you need to rapidly improve. It's often not enough to have a "good" interview. To secure the offer, you have to have a better interview than everyone else.

Practice is the secret weapon to being better than your competition because your competition doesn't want to practice.

Your four hours of practice should include:

- A read-through where you take your written response structure and verbalize it to see how it sounds.

- An "off-book" phase where you memorize your written responses.
- A dress rehearsal where you simulate the real interview by
    1. Getting an interviewer who will take it seriously;
    2. Not breaking character;
    3. Holding feedback until the end;
    4. Getting honest, candid feedback;
    5. Doing two mock interviews (but no less than one)
    6. Allowing your interviewer to develop questions.

Start with Momentum. Owning the First Question.

Starting the interview off strong means reframing "Tell me about yourself" to "Tell me about why you are the perfect fit for this job?" Your opportunity to start telling them why you are the best candidate for the job comes right at the beginning of the interview. Why wait? Your response to the first question is your chance to spoon-feed them exactly what they are looking for. If you do this well, you will create what all candidates wish for in a job interview: momentum. Interview momentum is an invisible but powerful force.

Answer the first question by persuading without being pushy; express gratitude, use facts instead of claims, respect a person's right to disagree, radiate positivity.

Your opening statement should convey that you have three things:

- Skills: the experiences you walk them through should be easy to understand and related to the job description.
- Results: highlight a positive result you achieved in each experience—business results, promotions, and an increase in responsibility all can pass as results at this stage.
- Interest: give unique reasons for why you are so interested in this company and role.

Tell Compelling Stories. Mastering Behavioral Questions.

Behavioral questions ask you to tell stories because stories are better than data, principles, or platitudes. Our brains are wired for stories. When we hear a good story, we learn something new, but more important, we feel emotion. A story that inspires emotion solidifies the information in our minds and makes it memorable.

Show, don't tell, by creating specific stories demonstrating your skills to do the job.

Create five to seven power stories based on the skills the employer wants. Don't try to create a unique story for every possible behavioral question.

When telling stories, use the SPAR model:

- Situation: make it brief and related to the story.
- Problem: create tension, so the interviewer wants to keep listening.
- Action: explain what you uniquely did to solve the problem by using the "rule of three."
- Result: tie it in a bow.

Use Simple Frameworks. Nailing Scenario Questions.

Scenario interview questions, also known as hypothetical, situational, or case questions, are open-ended questions that require you to formulate answers in real time, based on a real-world scenario.

Some examples are:

- How would you approach your first ninety days on this job?
- What areas of opportunity do you see for our business?
- How would you go about making an upset customer happy?
- How would you compete against our business if you were our competitor?
- Which of our competitors is doing the best job in the market and why?
- If you were offered this position, how would you go about building relationships with key players in this office?
- What would your approach be for building our social media presence?
- Tell me what you think about this piece of advertising. How would you make it better?

As you explore paths, not only will your opinion materialize, but you will also have developed sound logic for it.

- What would you do if you were given an assignment with an unreasonable timeline?

They are among the hardest interview questions to answer because:

- There are no right or wrong answers.
- They are open-ended and ambiguous.
- The interviewer has an information advantage.
- They require you to think in the moment.

The way to answer them is with the Home Base model.

- Establish a home base: develop a core principle or idea that you will use as the foundation for your response. Your home base needs to be broad enough to have multiple paths going out from it.
- Explore paths: generate and discuss options that tie directly back to your home base. A path is a specific idea or action you can take that ties directly back to your home base. Exploring paths should be the longest part of your answer. You shouldn't just mention the path, you should discuss it, its pros and cons and implications. This is where you demonstrate your critical thinking skills.
- Pick a path or summarize your answer: wrap it up by offering your best choice with your reasoning. Taking the time to establish a home base and explore paths has a remarkable way of giving you a great final answer to a question that you didn't have at the outset. As you explore paths, not only will your opinion materialize, but you will also have developed sound logic for it.

Know Thyself. Answering Questions about You.

"You" questions are those that ask you to talk about yourself and how you think.

Companies ask "you" questions to gauge your self-awareness and cultural fit for the company. You don't need to develop new stories to answer these questions; you merely need to reframe the power stories you already have.

Put your stories into the SEE model:

- Statement: give a simple, concise answer to their question.
- Explanation: explain what you mean by giving more context.
- Example: provide an example that proves your point.

Avoid Land Mines. Handling Illegal, Negative, or Just Plain Wacky Questions.

In the job interview frontier, you may get asked the following types of questions:

- Trap questions, which are seemingly genuine questions that have the potential to take you to an overly negative place. Answer them by staying positive and discussing how you overcame a difficult situation.
- On-the-spot creativity questions, which require you to offer ideas in real time. Answer them by staying calm and playing along. Don't worry about having a perfect answer.
- Illegal questions, which force you to make a difficult decision to answer the question or call out the interviewers. Answer them by asking the purpose behind the question, asking how the question applies to the job description, telling them the question is illegal, or just answering the question. It depends on the context of the question.
- Wacky questions, which are strange enough to make you want to laugh out loud. Answer them by having fun and being confident. Recognize that there is no one "right answer" and that strange questions allow for strange answers.

Strike Last, Strike Hard. Asking Questions, Closing, and Following Up.

The end of the interview is your opportunity to finish strong.

If they ask you if you have any questions, avoid

- questions you ask only to look smart,
- questions that clearly put you and your career first,
- questions that require the interviewer to speculate,
- negative questions,
- questions that require long, complicated answers, and
- questions for which the interviewer likely doesn't know the answer.

Instead, ask engaging questions that

- genuinely interest you,
- are related to the job, and
- the interviewer is uniquely qualified to answer.

Never close the interview without resolving potential concerns. Resolve them by using "I understand" and "however." Make your final pitch by telling them you love them. End with a committed timeline for when you can follow up.

Know Your Worth. Negotiating Your Best Offer.

When it comes to salary negotiations, focus outward instead of inward. Fairness, competence, and need don't matter. Points of difference, high switching costs, and market dynamics do matter.

The ten laws of compensations negotiations are:

1. The best time to negotiate your compensation is when you have an offer in writing.
2. Any agreements, promises, or statements not in writing should not be taken seriously.
3. It's best to be paid what you are worth, not a lot more or a lot less.
4. Compensation is about salary and so much more.
5. Companies are much more willing to negotiate if they believe you will accept the offer.
6. Don't underestimate the power of likability.
7. You likely won't burn bridges by negotiating hard.
8. Knowledge is power.
9. A rushed deal is usually a bad deal for one party or the other.
10. Your current salary can be a good negotiating point, or it can be a liability.

The four steps in salary negotiations are:

1. Identify what you want and what you can live with.
2. Prepare your justification.
3. Rehearse your response.
4. Deliver your response through a live conversation.

Learn, Build, and Contribute in Your New Job

You now have a new challenge: thriving in your new position. Thriving means starting your new role with momentum. It means enjoying what you are doing and the people with whom you are doing it, feeling that you are doing great, meaningful work. Most important, it means feeling that your future is bright at your new company. There are some important things you must do to start your new job off strong.

Manage Your Manager

Your relationship with your boss is the most important relationship you have at your new job. It's more important than your relationship with peers, direct reports, and people in other departments.

If your relationship with your boss is weak, your job will be draining, stressful, and downright miserable enough to make you consider leaving. But if it is strong, you will be on the path to winning at your company, resulting in more responsibility, more advancement, and more money in your pocket.

Build a Relationship With Everyone You Will Work With

Being new at the company gives you a perfect excuse to set up thirty-minute meetings with those you will be working with, including peers, superiors, potential mentors, and people in other departments. This is your free chance to establish personal connections. You don't want your first interaction with someone from another department to be when you need something from them.

Listen More Than You Speak

Too many new employees think that the way to succeed in a new position is to shake things up, to establish themselves by making a lot of changes. As a result, they make critical errors because they fail to properly assess the culture and background at the organization. And worse, they come off as arrogant, which is way worse than if you had just shut up in the first place.

Nail Your First Assignments

Listening and learning doesn't mean you can't find ways to contribute meaningfully. Whatever your first assignments are, no matter how trivial, do them with excellence.

Make Your Own Good Luck

"What role does luck play in career success?" Luck plays a significant role, but its power diminishes over time. Things tend to work out for those who keep trying.

Job interview success is not about luck or natural-born talent but about preparation, mindset, and confidence. The foundation of becoming an excellent candidate is first believing that you are one. This confidence doesn't come from merely telling yourself you're good enough—it's built through deliberate and disciplined preparation.

By clearing away negative thoughts, embracing the uncomfortable aspects of preparation, and committing to dedicated practice, you can approach interviews with the knowledge and poise necessary to stand out. This process isn't just about landing one job; it's about developing the lifelong skill of positioning yourself effectively in any career situation.

As you adopt these principles, you'll not only excel in interviews but also cultivate the resilience and expertise that will open doors to continued success throughout your professional journey. Ultimately, you're not just preparing for a job—you're shaping your future by building the confidence to navigate every career challenge ahead.



Sam Owens is the founder of Sam's Career Talk where he provides career coaching services and helps people land their dream jobs and thrive in them. He is also a chief marketing officer who has worked for three multi-billion-dollar companies in the consumer-packaged goods (CPG) industry, and now runs marketing for Freezing Point, the makers of Frazil.

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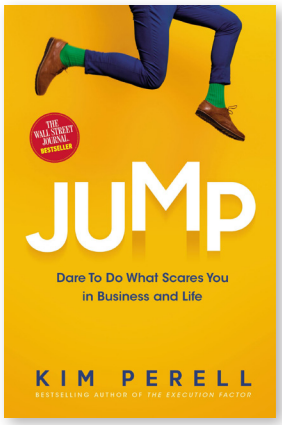
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Dare to Do What Scares You in Business and in Life



by **Kim Perell**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

There comes a moment in our lives when we know we need to make a move. Whether we are unsatisfied or feel hungry to pursue a radically different professional path, we know that this isn't going to be a mere step into something else. It's going to be a jump! A big leap into the unknown.

Feeling fearful is extremely common and natural in this circumstance, but author Kim Perell knows that something bigger and better is waiting for you. If your instinct is telling you that it's time to make a change in your life, ***Jump: Dare to Do What Scares You in Business and Life*** was written for you. In it, Perell guides readers through life-changing decisions with actionable advice to make that change, overcome your doubts, and find the courage to take calculated risks that pay off.

She combines her personal experience jumping into the great unknown with over twenty years as an entrepreneur, executive, and investor, to share lessons and insights that will help you find the courage and confidence to jump while avoiding mistakes she made while making her own big leaps.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Three main reasons to take big leaps.
- Four excuses that prevent you from jumping.
- Why mindset and decision making matter.
- How to create your One-Year Success Plan.

Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries® (ISSN 0747-2196), 225 Wilmington West Chester Pike, Suite 202, Chadds Ford, PA 19317 USA. • Copyright ©2019 by Soundview, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited. • Subscriptions start at $99/year. To subscribe, visit summary.com. • Vol. 44 No. 15 (2 parts). Part 1, June 2022 Order #44-15 Meghan P. Kozak, Editor-in-Chief • Kristen Cudd, Senior Editor • Kylie Waytuck, Graphic Designer

Take the Leap

You know those decisions that make your heart race and your palms sweat? The ones that are so overwhelming you start asking yourself, how in the world did I even get into this position in the first place? Jumpers do. They have felt that way many times before.

Successful entrepreneurs haven't always been successful. They have to take a lot of risks and leap off a lot of cliffs to get there…and even after jumping to huge wins, may still get that heart-racing, palm-sweating sensation before leaping into the unknown.

Before you dive in, it's important to know why you are going to jump. There are three main reasons people take big leaps.

Reason #1: You Have No Other Choice

The Survival Jump happens when you are forced to change. You've been fired, bankrupt, or had a life-changing event. This is less of a choice and more of an emergency exit. It comes when you find yourself at rock bottom.

That lonely, hopeless place is where so many find themselves at some point in their lives. Many people around you have felt this way–during the recessions of the dot-com bust in the early 2000's, the 2008 financial crisis, and, most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic that caused an unprecedented global shutdown.

And if there is one piece of wisdom you should take away from this book, it's this: if you've got to jump, rock bottom is a great place to start. After all, there is nowhere to go but up.

Reason #2: You See an Opportunity

The Opportunity to Jump is when you want to change because you have a vision. You see a way to improve your life through bold action. You're stable and happy now, but you have big dreams, a business idea, or a vision of how you want your life to be. You feel certain you are meant to do something bigger. Like most entrepreneurs that make this kind of jump, you have the power of seeing something not as it is, but as the potential of what it could be.

Reason #3: You're Stuck

The Stagnant Jump is when you're considering a change because you're stagnated, are bored, or feel unfulfilled. You've reached a certain point in your career where you aren't sure what to do next. You feel comfortable but not challenged. You stay put because that feels easier than jumping into the unknown.

Chances are that if you are stagnant, you already know. If you dread Mondays, live for the weekend, or have to force yourself out of bed; if you are bored out of your mind; if you are miserable in your job or see no upward trajectory in your career, you're probably a Stagnant Jumper.

There is danger in stagnation. It is the exact opposite of what you've set out to achieve. Monotony is the death of creativity. In my experience, there is no growth in the comfort zone, and if you want to overcome stagnation, you need to change. You must stop stagnating and start planning the next stage of your career, your life, and your future. Like me, you must choose to pull yourself out of the quicksand.

Look Before You Leap

Before you take a life-changing leap, make sure you're prepared to jump. The last thing you want to do is hesitate. You need to do, to start, and to act! You don't want to fall on your face or hit a wall just as you're building momentum. Changing your life is about overcoming fear and shifting your mindset, but it's also important to look before you leap. Let's talk about how to jump into your change with your eyes wide open. Here are a few questions to ask yourself before jumping.

1. What's the worst that could happen? Try not to drive yourself into a panic, but do your best to articulate the worst, ugliest, most dire scenario that could result from your jump. Then imagine the best that could happen. Is the positive more powerful than the negative?
2. Who else will my actions affect? It's much easier to jump into huge, life-altering changes if you don't have any dependents but your choices might still impact coworkers, colleagues, or investors. So ask yourself how your jump will impact the people in your life.
3. Who has done this before? Consider connecting with someone who has done this before and already knows the ropes. Getting their input and advice may help build your confidence, warn you about some pitfalls, or both!
4. What are your strengths and superpowers? Before you drastically alter your life, take stock of all the positives. Do you have expertise, education, a network of smart people, a supportive partner? Before you leap, make a list of things that will bring you comfort and support as you dive into uncertainty.

5. Can you see the first three steps onto this path? You don't need to see the end of the road, and you don't even need a complete map of the journey! All you need is a rough sense of your first few related actions and enough confidence in yourself to choose the next ones when the time comes.
6. Are you prepared to navigate unpredictability? Things will go wrong after you jump. This is not a possibility; it's a certainty! So ask yourself how you feel about setbacks, roadblocks, and errors. Are you good at pivoting? What can you do to prepare yourself for unexpected challenges?

If, after all the preparation, you're still hesitating, consider this: in their last moments of life, people wish they'd had more courage, taken more risks, and chased their dreams with more conviction. Taking a leap may be scary, but regret is scarier. So prepare yourself, take a deep breath, and jump.

> Taking a leap may be scary, but regret is scarier.

Master Your Mindset

Your mindset is the most important predictor of your success and happiness in life. Change your mindset and change your life. Your mindset is your thoughts and beliefs about your own abilities. Think of it as the lens that you observe the world through.

Your mindset plays a critical role in how you cope with challenges and how you feel about yourself and your accomplishments. It's not usually logistics, money, or anything concrete that's held you back so far; it's your fears, feelings, and thoughts. Mindset may be a huge reason you haven't taken your jump yet.

When you recalibrate your mindset, you're going to get more confident internalizing risk and embracing change. You will have the tools you need to align your heart and head so you can jump with conviction. The first step is to eliminate excuses that prevent you from jumping.

Excuse #1: I'm Scared I'll Fail

Here's a secret: failure is inevitable. Failure hurts badly, but you can't stop it. Failure will knock you down but when you get knocked down, you have to get back up and keep going.

Excuse #2: I Don't Have Enough Time

If you spend eight hours sleeping and eight hours working, you've still got eight hours of opportunity. What are you doing during your eight hours of freedom? Being a caretaker or parent requires time so if you're in that position you'll need to get creative about maximizing your hours and earnings. But if, like many people, you spend your spare hours watching TV or scrolling social media, you can reprioritize that time to focus on your goal.

Excuse #3: I Don't Have Enough Money

In an era when many businesses can be run entirely online, you can launch something new with a couple hundred dollars in your bank account. Start small, handling as much of the initial work yourself as humanly possible, doing this on the side while working full time. Build slowly, be patient, and when your side hustle is bringing in enough revenue, then you can make your jump!

Excuse #4: I Don't Have Enough Experience

This is not a good excuse. We live in a time when there are unlimited resources to help you get the skills and expertise you need. Everyone has to start somewhere, so don't let a lack of experience stop you. Pretend you're good at it until you actually are good at it.

Excuses are easy. They allow us to stay in our comfort zones. When you choose to delete your excuses, you're giving yourself the gift of more room and strength and resources to act. It is a choice. Consider it your first mindset-mastery assignment to actively choose to eradicate the excuses that have been forcing you to stay still and play small.

Visualize Your Success

There's a reason why visualization has been a part of elite sports for decades: it is the real deal. You can visualize the outcome you want to achieve long before you have achieved

it, and that mindset prep paves the way for success. Visualization activates the subconscious mind. If you incorporate visual images and words related to your goal and place it in your direct line of sight, you will take more action critical to achieving it. You can literally create your own reality. Changing your thoughts can change your life. Envisioning a successful jump will help bring that success into being.

Coding Confidence

Even with all of your excuses obliterated and your mental obstacles cleared away, you may still hit a wall of fear and doubt when you approach change itself. Fortunately, confidence is an active choice. Contrary to what we've been taught, confidence is not a personality trait. No one is born confident. Self-confidence is generated by the thoughts we think (mindsets!) and the actions we take. Interestingly, it's less about our actual ability to succeed at a task than it is about our belief in our ability to succeed.

Confidence is directly tied to past performance so it can be practiced and cultivated like any other habit or skill. In advance of your big jump, set up a series of smaller jumps to prove to yourself that you can do hard things. This will affect your mindset and eventually become a running list of accomplishments you can pull up whenever you're feeling unsure. This will help you focus on what you can do, instead of what you can't.

Before you say that you are not ready, remember: no one is ever truly ready for anything. You cannot let that stop you from taking action. If you wait until you feel ready, chances are it will never happen. Great people, successful people, brave people all dive into action before they're ready. They all take risks and force themselves to jump without knowing for certain where they'll land. Readiness is a myth. It can even become an excuse, if you let it.

The Power of Decision-Making

To make a jump in the right direction, you need to know the difference between a visionary choice and a wild guess. But even if we feel sure of ourselves and make a choice that is unquestionably sound, things can still go sideways.

Our decisions aren't made in a vacuum. They are impacted by luck, other people, and by information we don't have or cannot see. This is not an argument for avoiding decisions at all cost. It is a way to tell you that how you make decisions is as important as the decisions themselves.

Since you can't predict or prepare for all outcomes–and since undesirable results are always a possibility–you've got o learn to make informed choices using incomplete information.

Every decision you make is a calculated risk. Make careful observations and make decisions based on your incomplete view with your best hunch on the situation. This will hone your skill at making the best decisions you possibly can.

"Analysis paralysis" is most likely to attack when you're wrestling with concrete decisions. As you gear up for your transformational jump, you may hesitate while you imagine the million ways your plans could unfold. You need to prevent yourself from researching and fact finding for too long. Here are some reasons to avoid overanalysis:

- You'll stop listening to your gut
- You'll end up with more data than you can vet
- You won't get the clarity you seek
- Escape the "when ____ finally happens, then I will _____" trap
- You only need to be 70 percent ready (because you will never be fully ready)
- The choices you make are almost never permanent

Change is what fuels creativity, passion, learning, innovation…life. And just as you can't let yourself stay comfortable and unchanged for decades at a time, you can't be responsible for making everyone around you comfortable with your decisions. You don't have to manage that. You just have to continue making decisions, continue moving forward, continue preparing for that jump.

If you struggle to make and trust your decisions because you fear other people's criticism, you are not alone. But you can't let them stop you. Decision-making is a skill that can be practiced. Studies have shown that microdecisions make bigger decisions easier, so practice making small choices and lead up to large ones.

Define Success on Your Own Terms

Success is relative, personal, and always changing. And as your life continues, you'll keep defining and redefining success in different ways. Money and prestige are two of the most traditional markers of success, and they both have their advantages, but there's a lot more to defining success than bank accounts and fancy titles.

Many of us mistakenly believe that success is always about work. But this simply isn't true. Success can be defined in infinite ways.

Success for you can be freedom, health, or joy. For someone else, it can be the ability to spend more time with your family. Success can be defined more broadly while encompassing four areas of physical, emotional, spiritual, and financial.

The definition of success is the most personal thing there is. There is no single "right" way to define success. It means that everyone views success differently, so everyone gets to decide for themselves when they've achieved it. Including you.

Since success can be framed any way you want, you should decide what it looks like to you. It's crucial to do this before you begin planning for or taking your jump since it can influence your process, benchmarks, and ultimate results. This is all about your goals and needs, so take some time to formalize how you want to see it play out.

Here are three exercises to help define what success means before a jump.

- Components of Success: Imagine yourself after the jump and identify the components of that feeling which may include security, satisfaction, and the classics like money and power.
- Understanding Goals and Visualizing Dreams: Goals and concrete with a specific set of results in mind. A larger dream is a long-term vision that can be achieved with years of planning and work. Think about what success would look and feel like at both levels.
- Output Versus Outcomes: Output is a single project that gets completed and results in the creation of a product or body of knowledge. Outcome is the consequence of the work you did and it encompasses your transformation as a person. Think about success in terms of the outcomes your successful self will gain from your work, studies, experiences, or endeavors.

Even after defining success for yourself, you may waver. When people in your life learn about your jump, they may try to impose their own ideas about success on you. You will undoubtedly see portrayals of success in the news and other media that focus exclusively on money and fame, and these shared ideas about what a full, rich life "should" be may cause you to question your custom-made definition.

That's fine.

None of us are immune to outside influences. But push back when these forces start to creep in. The list of "you shoulds" is almost endless, and that makes it daunting. But "you shoulds" aren't about you; they're about someone else's definition of success. Once you start listening to the clamor of voices and opinions, you'll be free to pursue the things that matter most to you.

The definition of success is the most personal thing there is.

With that in mind, it's time to decide how you're going to measure your progress. The definition you've written for yourself will give you the parameters you need to envision the finish line, but you'll still need to hone in on some mile markers. In order to enjoy your success as fully as possible, you need to create some metrics for yourself.

In a business context, metrics are things like profitability and growth. In life, metrics may revolve around how content, healthy, or engaged you feel. Since your jump is likely to have overlap between work and life, you should consider drawing metrics from both categories.

Things like:

- Financial freedom or security
- Spending more time doing things you enjoy than things you dread
- Feeling valued and fulfilled by your work and daily activities
- Pride in accomplishments

Finally, you can't completely change your future without finding resolution in your past. In order to make the most of your jump, you need to fully understand and accept what you're moving away from and why. This is an excellent opportunity to make peace with your past.

Create Your One-Year Success Plan

A year is a useful yardstick for most jumps since it provides you with just enough leeway to prepare yourself and take action, but not so much that you'll end up spinning your wheels.

Your one-year success plan will be your secret weapon to navigating this new territory. You need a plan! You wouldn't go into the forest without a map and you shouldn't take a big jump without a plan.

Good planning begins at the end point, with the goal, and builds backward. If you don't know where you're going, you can't expect to get there. Start with a vision that shows what your life will be like at the end of these amazing twelve months before you build a simple, streamlined, and practical plan.

Capture your Vision

This should be like a personal mission statement that is passionate, but concise and includes:

- Where you want to go in one year
- What you want to accomplish in one year
- Who you want to become.

Start Backward

Once you have a clear vision, start working backward, building a framework of milestones you need to hit. This reverse engineering process will help you get a sense of how long each step will take and when it will need to be completed.

Set Deadlines

Attach due dates and deliverables to everything in this plan or it won't get done.

Do the Hardest Thing First

Try to get the most difficult and daunting tasks out of the way as quickly as possible. This will not only give you a sense of relief for finishing it, but it also gives you momentum.

Find an Accountability Partner

Your life is full and busy, your energy is limited, and you're doing something that challenges you! Getting an accountability partner is a great way to keep yourself on track and ensure you follow through with your commitments fully and on time.

Celebrate the Small Wins

Success doesn't happen overnight, and it takes time to achieve a big goal. Celebrating small wins along the journey is an important way to track incremental progress and keep my team motivated and energized.

Set Yourself Up for Success

Goal setting is a powerful process that gives you the motivation and direction you need to achieve success. There is nothing more powerful than achieving a goal, big or small. If it's a small goal, accomplish it quickly and move on to the next. If you set a larger goal, break the path into small, achievable, realistic steps–ones you can make daily progress on.

A Path Leads to a Path

Once you get the courage to take the first step, the path you're on will eventually lead to another path. All successful people take action. They know there is no wrong first step.

Even if the path you're on leads you to something that doesn't work, that doesn't mean it's the end of the journey. It just means you need to pivot in a new direction. Remain open to the paths that may show up along the way.

A year will whiz by, especially if you're working hard and steadily toward a goal that excites you. But it also gives you enough breathing room to test out ideas, try, fail, backtrack, revise, get help, and experiment. A year is not that long. A year is the perfect amount of time to create meaningful change.

Change is scary, and a life-altering jump is nothing to take lightly. But I don't want your fear to stop you, and I don't want you to wait until you're no longer afraid.

Instead, use that fear to transform your life! You've got all the knowledge, the principles, and a kick-ass one-year success plan. Now it's time to apply your energy. Get started and build momentum. Make the jump.



Kim Perell is an award-winning entrepreneur, bestselling author, tech CEO, and angel investor who has made headlines for her transformative story. She went from getting laid off and being broke at 23 to becoming a multi-millionaire by the time she was 30 and selling her last company for $235 million. Kim has spent the last two decades as a CEO in the digital media and technology sector, most recently as the Chief Executive of Amobee, one of the world's leading independent advertising platforms. Kim is also a prominent angel investor who has invested in over 80 companies, 16 of which have successfully been acquired, and some of those are now worth billions.

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Measure Up

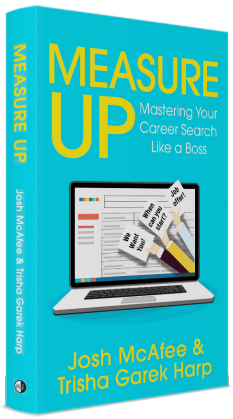
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Measure Up

Mastering Your Career Search Like a Boss



by **Josh McAfee**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Struggling to find the right job and get hired to do work about which you're truly passionate? Within ***Measure Up*** is a series of exceptional strategies, insider perspectives, tactics to use, and easy communication templates that are attuned to the current social and technological realities.

This summary will help teach you how to build your value story, reframe your failures and resume gaps to your advantage, and turn an interview into a valuable conversation. It will help you see yourself through a hiring manager's eyes and build rapport, making it easy for someone to hire you and embracing your emotional baggage. You'll learn to benefit from peer feedback and discover what you need to do to be seen as someone who wants to contribute. Overall, you'll discover how to connect with people who can further your career goals, help you locate open positions, build your network, and find new opportunities.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to be your best and most attractive self as a candidate in an interview and while networking.
- How to turn yourself into a valuable product in your industry, and how to see yourself as such.
- How to have and build on your confidence and turn it into your greatest asset.
- How to make hiring you the easiest decision a hiring manager has ever made.

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Change Your Mind

How strong is the fire in your belly to change your life through a changed career? How badly do you want to reach your goals? What are you willing to do or sacrifice to achieve your dreams? What is motivating you from deep within to pursue a satisfying, new job or career? Plan a break from your job search process to take account of what's guiding you at the deepest level of your core. What is urging you from within, prodding you now to uproot your same-old-same-old and begin to construct a new personal and career identity?

Knowing this will give you focus, clarity, and power behind your action steps. It energizes your search and fuels your determination to get where you want to go. Finding the fire in your belly can be one of the most defining moments in your life and career. Frankly, those who have found it usually work harder and smarter than those who don't.

Be warned: this process takes time and can be an emotional roller coaster ride. But it will free power and awareness to stoke your mission toward your own success and happiness.

Now, ask yourself these questions, writing down the answers somewhere you'll remember.

Why do you want to change your career?

What's motivating you to succeed?

Why is it important to you now?

What's the worst thing that would happen if you didn't do this now?

Imagine yourself 20 years from now. How will you feel if you don't make the career changes you want to make and are capable of now?

Imagine yourself in your 60s. What does your life look like? Are you still working in a job you love? What do you want to feel proudest of as you look back in your career?

Failures Are Perfectly Fine

We live in a social-media-obsessed, anxiety-ridden culture, and when you go online to see other people out there achieving things, getting promotions, and having fun, you can feel like the last kid picked for the kickball team. The fallacy is that they are happy, self-assured, clear of their direction, and better than you. This is very likely not reality.

Underneath those big smiles, just about everyone has similar fears that things are going to start crumbling around them. No matter how polished someone's persona seems, no matter how strong their voice or how wide their smiles, everyone fakes it to some degree. No one is 100% confident all the time.

When we face hardships and life challenges, we sometimes succumb to the victim mentality, which will slowly drain the confidence out of anyone. But NElson Mandela once famously said, "I never lose. Either I win or learn."

Each so-called loss or failure is actually a great learning opportunity. Interestingly, many industry leaders have said they find as much value in what people have learned from their failures as they do from their successes. When viewed through a different lens, most failures have the potential to be turned around and turned into personal successes.

Who Are You, Anyway?

What if you could put yourself on a shelf? All boxed up, just waiting to catch the eye of the next customer shopping for a new employee. Inside yourself, you have plenty of accomplishments, successes and failures that make you valuable to them. You're almost bursting at the seams with your history, skills, and desire for a more satisfying career. But your packaging...well, that might need some work. The customer notices the next box, with precise, plastic-wrapped corners and all jazzed up with colors and promises.

Viewing yourself as a 'product' might change the way you think about yourself in the work world. You are now a product in a marketplace. It's time to start viewing your job search as an exercise in marketing and 'selling' the product to the best possible customers (employers).

You can also imagine yourself as a character in a book. How would the author describe you, your strengths, weaknesses, and your skills?

Only you can get your product right for the marketplace. If that product is missing parts, prospective employers and your networks will fill in the gaps with their own ideas of who you are. They'll make assumptions when thinking about what you have to offer and whether it's valuable. If you don't define yourself, you will be dependent on assumptions and descriptions other people place on you.

Communicating More Effectively

Dale Carnegie, author of the legendary How to Win Friends and Influence People, said, "Why talk about what we want? That is childish. Absurd. Of course, you are interested in what you want. You are eternally interested in it. But no one else is. The rest of us are just like you: we are interested in what we want. So the only way on earth to influence other people is to talk about what they want and show them how to get it.

The fact is, everybody is wrapped up in everything going on in their own world— and these days, that's a lot. So it takes a different kind of communication to tap into your network and break through barriers for your career.

Pay attention to personal details with your connections. Keep track of the details in a journal or online tool. Reference them in conversation. Become a student of what people say with their body language, facial expressions, and eye contact in reaction to what you or others are sharing. Start by noticing any subtle changes indicating shifting thoughts or feelings.

There's a common misconception that there are simply people who naturally engage and communicate well, and those who don't, and you're simply doomed to be one or the other depending on your genes. People who have this fixed mindset about their communication abilities feel 'silly' about consciously taking steps to improve their communication skills— such as the personal notes about your connections' interests mentioned above. But these conscious actions are the first major step towards making yourself a more natural, powerful, and engaged communicator.

Noticing how people react physically to conversations is one more step toward communicating effectively. It will also help you pay attention to your own cues. Lean in, stand up straight with shoulders back, arms at your side; and maintain eye contact with genuine interest. You'll likely notice more engagement from those you are talking with.

Meanwhile, don't be afraid to 'study' the communicators in your life. Is there someone that always seems to have the full attention of anyone in the room? Consider why and how that is, and how you can adopt some of their same traits in your day-to-day interactions in the workplace and beyond.

Expanding Your Network: Positive Influencers

Positive influencers can be a powerful tool in our lives and careers. As you explore who they are, you also discover more about who you are. It's another big step in job hunting and career changes to define and refine yourself.

Make a list of the people you admire and appreciate. It could be anyone from Mother Teresa to Puff Daddy or even your own mom or dad. Write down their best characteristics and traits. Then, ask yourself, "How much do I want to be a person who thinks and acts in those ways?"

Next, take action! This starts with a simple list with the very next steps to becoming more of the person you want to be. You might decide to:

- Tell others what you appreciate about them
- Set reading goals with books (like this one) that will challenge you and help you grow
- Invest in others without expectation of return
- Say thank you more often
- Expect less and give more
- Stand up for someone or something you believe in
- Listen more and talk less
- Be more proactive instead of reactive

By the time you've worked through this list, you'll already be carrying yourself with a bit more self-awareness, self-confidence, and self-accountability— ideal for building relationships with admirable people. The more you interact with them, the more they'll refer you to others looking for expertise in your wheelhouse.

Applying Yourself

You're already miles ahead of the competition at this point. You have the ingredients you need to find that well-fitting, rewarding job where you can shine and add your unique value to a company. Now it's time to put it all together.

Remember, your efforts in job hunting rest on the foundation of seeing yourself as a valuable product and your potential employers as a potential consumer of that product. But how do you find the right jobs and opportunities?

Data offers insights and the ability to manage and focus your efforts. A large component of the career hunting process is collecting and keeping track of valuable data about the playing field—the organizations, positions, people, influencers, hiring managers, and whoever or whatever else you deem

important, connecting you to your own personal end zone.

What are all the job titles relating to your career search?

What are the companies you've identified based on your list of positions and job titles?

Next, it's time to start reaching out in whatever form makes sense. Meeting in person is best, but if this isn't possible a video or phone call is the next best thing.

Communicating with new contacts and starting conversations can be intimidating at first, but the more you do it the more comfortable you'll become.

Inside the Interview

Finally, you've arrived at the door. Now it's time to go through the door. After all, getting the job you've been dreaming of isn't just about landing the interview— it's about the interview itself.

To get into interview mode, you're going to have to switch gears a bit. So far, your process of finding and landing a career has been mostly an isolated exercise. Now it's time to get out from behind your desk and interact with people who can hire you and make an impact on the course of your career. This means: knowing what mindset to bring with you, how you want to present yourself, how you're going to interact, and how you're going to prepare.

Your first step is to prepare, prepare, prepare and practice, practice, practice. You cannot prepare or practice too much. One might think that you can't prepare for unexpected questions or improvisation that comes during an interview, but the fact is that the more prepared you are, the more capable you are of improvising on the fly. Just ask any jazz musician and they'll tell you that the better you know the song, the better equipped you are to improvise wildly within it.

Don't forget everything you've learned so far— listen for unspoken cues and watch for body language, and choose the right mindset for your approach to the interview. See your interviews as collaborations, not confrontations. Ask questions of your interviewers that will help you be more prepared for the position. Meanwhile, see every interview as an opportunity. Either you land the job, or you learn something from the experience. You may even dare to enjoy yourself during an interview. Don't consider it your only shot, consider it your chance to show what you're capable of and impress somebody.

While you're at it, let your excitement show. Be excited about the journey you're on and let it show in your eyes, your voice, and your smile, whether you're meeting in person or in a video interview. People are more likely to hire you if they see you're in motion, moving toward an amazing future. They'll want to be part of your adventure.

The best way for them to do that is to hire you.



In addition to being a Wall Street Journal and USA Today bestselling author of *Measure Up: Mastering Your Career Search Like a Boss*, three-time founder, entrepreneur, tech investor, board member and advisor to high growth companies, Josh McAfee has spent almost thirty years in the recruiting and coaching world consulting with and placing thousands of leaders, sales, and tech-savvy people into high-growth companies. He founded, built, and sold a national tech staffing company and has helped countless leaders of high-growth companies grow their teams with the right people to have a positive impact on their products, culture, and, ultimately, their customers.

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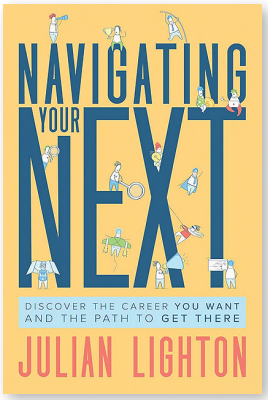
Navigating Your Next

Julian Lighton

Executive Book Summaries®

Navigating Your Next

Discover the Career You Want and the Path to Get There



by **Julian Lighton**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Navigating Your Next presents a structured approach to career decision-making and professional development, starting from the core premise that career progress begins with clarity about what a person actually wants and how their skills, motivations, and values align with possible opportunities. Rather than prescribing specific career paths, the book focuses on helping readers analyze their current situation and develop a deliberate plan for future roles and responsibilities.

The book introduces several practical frameworks to guide this process. Central among them is the Four Axis Framework, which examines competence, context, fit, and motivation to help readers understand where they are most likely to succeed. The text is organized around a seven-step process that moves from self-assessment and career clarity to planning, networking, execution, and reflection. Across three sections: Finding Your Next, Getting Your Next, and Living Your Next, the book outlines how individuals can define their value proposition, build supportive professional relationships, and execute a structured development roadmap toward their goals.

The author, Julian Lighton, draws on more than three decades of experience in business leadership and management consulting. His approach reflects lessons from corporate leadership roles as well as insights gained from hundreds of career coaching engagements with professionals navigating career transitions and advancement.

IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY

- Clarify career goals through structured self-assessment frameworks and reflection
- Evaluate strengths, competencies, and organizational fit across varied contexts
- Develop a clear professional value proposition for employers or collaborators
- Build and execute a structured development plan for long-term career direction

Introduction

Most of us will spend approximately ninety thousand hours of our lives working. That equates to a third of the average lifespan. Your time spent working is likely to contribute heavily to your sense of identity, well-being, social circles, and legacy, and to create most, if not all, of your wealth.

What do you want to do? Who do you want to be?

How you want to spend your ninety thousand working hours is one of the most relevant questions you can ask yourself.

Ikigai and Finding Your Next

Your destination might be a career move to a new industry, occupation, or sector of the work world, such as a pivot from corporate to nonprofit. Your goal might be to advance and grow in your professional life, or perhaps you're looking for the opposite, such as retiring or scaling back your focus on work.

Understanding and being able to pursue what you really want is liberating and empowering. The Japanese have a concept for this called *ikigai*, which is the place where what you are good at, what you love, what the world needs, and what you can get paid for converge. When you identify a path that fulfills all four elements, you've found your ikigai, a career or lifestyle that provides personal satisfaction, financial stability, and a sense of making a difference.

The journey to finding your ikigai is deeply personal and rarely linear. It requires balancing self-discovery with practical action, remaining open to possibilities, and aligning your career with your values and purpose.

While it may take time to pinpoint this alignment, the effort is worthwhile: A life guided by it can be both fulfilling and impactful, helping you wake up each day with a sense of meaning and excitement for what lies ahead.

PART I: FINDING YOUR NEXT

STEP 1

Initiate: You're About to Embark on a Journey

People who are successful and know what they want have clarity. Clarity is a state of focused understanding in which information is easily processed, while confusion is a state of uncertainty that makes it difficult to think, concentrate, or make decisions. Confusion also often leads to prevarication or procrastination. We might not be able to prioritize and sequence when confused, so we struggle to focus our efforts and are likely to find our energy scattered or dissipated.

One of the most frequent sources of confusion is the gap between our expectations and reality. Human beings are decision-making machines. We wander through space and time, encountering various stimuli, and we make decisions, mostly unconsciously, through pattern recognition based on our previous experiences.

When we experience a new situation that we have not encountered before, we try to extrapolate from existing learned patterns. When these fail to explain or rationalize what is going on, we get confused. The gap between what we expect and what is reality causes our conscious mental processes to be hijacked by underlying anxiety, fear, frustration, or anger.

To address this, we will follow a simple methodology consisting of seven Steps to Success. This will guide you from assessing where you are now to determining where you want to be, understanding your value proposition, creating and implementing an action plan, and finally celebrating and building on your success.

Six Superpower Character Traits

There are six common traits among people who have successfully navigated career transitions:

- positivity
- curiosity
- adaptability
- consistency
- persistence
- kindness

These are not necessarily innate personality traits but rather behaviors that can be cultivated and strengthened. Adopting a mindset built around these six behaviors provides you with the inner drive and resilience you'll need to push forward and stay focused even when faced with obstacles or setbacks. It provides the psychological foundation necessary for the demanding task of rigorous implementation. Think of these as muscles to be exercised regularly.

The more you use them, the higher return you will get, and the more they will stand out to others. As you go on your journey to your Next and become the identity you want, remember to always include these six characteristics.

> Live a life of desire backed by competence, and you will become an indomitable force of nature. ”

STEP 2

Insight: Know Yourself

The best way to start figuring out what you want is to take stock of your current reality. Who are you today? What are your strengths? What are your preferred contexts in which to use those strengths?

In Step 2, you will use the Four Axis Framework to hold up a mirror of reality to yourself. The framework asks a series of questions that will help you form an accurate picture of who you are as a person and where you are in your career. The axes are:

1. Competency
   - What skills and capabilities do you have?
   - How good are you at them?
   - What do you enjoy?
   - What have other people noticed you are good at?
2. Context
   - What organizations, teams, departments, and companies have you worked in?
   - Which environments did you like?
3. Culture
   - What are your values?
   - What cultures have you worked in?
   - What makes you feel supported?
4. Mindset
   - What are your motivations?
   - What are your aspirations and goals?
   - What are your limiting beliefs?
   - What is your decision-making process?

Head North for Insight into Your Competency

The first place your hitchhiker's guide is sending you is to assess your competency. Competency is a measure of how well you do things. It describes your ability to get things done, which is made up of your skills, capabilities, experience, and expertise with them. It is a measure of your level of mastery of acquired skills and your actualization of innate abilities.

We care about competency because employers look for evidence that you've applied your skills and capabilities. In terms of ikigai, it is what you are good at and what you can get paid for.

Competency in Three Parts

1. **Intrinsic competencies** – an essential part of you, often from birth or a very young age. Examples include intelligence, charisma, a heightened sense of smell, perfect pitch, physical skills, artistic talent, and logical thinking.
2. **Generalist competencies** – versatile skills that can be deployed across multiple functional roles, industries, or work settings. These are sometimes referred to as transferable skills. Examples include project management, organization, problem-solving, active listening, persuading or motivating, spoken communications, writing, coordinating, and collaborating.
3. **Specialist competencies** – skills that are specific to an industry, a functional area, or a technology or process. Examples would be expertise in insurance, sales, negotiation, and client development.

Head East for Insight into Context

Now we move to the east quadrant of the Four Axis Framework, to context. For our purposes, context refers to the situations and environments in which you have demonstrated and built your competencies.

An affinity for smaller environments, whether a team or an overall organization, is generally predicated on a focus on relationships. This often involves high-touch interactions with people to build engagement and trust.

By contrast, an affinity for larger environments is generally predicated on a focus on tasks. This emphasizes outcomes based on shared processes and content.

Head South for Insight into Your Culture

We experience each other through our interactions as a series of values. We observe and form impressions of one another, both consciously and unconsciously. Are we kind? Are we curious?

Ultimately, what we want to understand is who you are from a values standpoint. How do you show up, and what matters to you in how others show up?

Make a list of your personal values—what you stand for and consider important. Then make a separate list of the cultures you have worked in and consider these questions:

- Do you see an overlap with your own values or hardly any?
- Which cultures have felt most positive and comfortable for you?

Write down as many details as you can when reflecting on the issue of culture because this area is likely to be the canary in the coal mine as you determine which types of cultures you want to or do not want to work in. Culture is critical for describing what you may be most interested in regarding future options.

Head West for Insight into Your Mindset

The final element of the Four Axis Framework is mindset. Mindset refers to your established set of attitudes concerning motivation, goals, beliefs or biases, and decision-making. Your mindset is essentially how you play both the inner and outer game of life; your inner attitudes drive your outwardly visible and measurable behaviors.

This includes four key elements:

- motivation
- aspirations and goals
- beliefs or biases
- decision-making

Taking stock of your current reality by working through the Four Axis Framework is a key foundation for deciding on and moving toward your desired future reality—your Next.

STEP 3

Imagine: Know Your Options

Most people struggle with deciding what they want, typically in one of two ways:

1. They get stuck in confusion caused by too many possibilities, unsure how to determine what they really want.
2. They get overwhelmed by the gap between their desired future and current reality.

This sense of overwhelm usually stems from not knowing what is probable and how to take small, purposeful actions that build confidence and lead to longer-term achievement.

Taking purposeful action is a skill you can learn. Deliberate and sustained practice of an action that leads to your goal is purposeful and helps you transform yourself through changing habits and behaviors for the better.

In addition to action, mindset is key. Feeling sad or overwhelmed when you compare the life you have today with what you desire is normal but not useful. This is not manifestation or motivation. It's destructive. Get excited about how you could become better today and succeed tomorrow. Live a life of desire backed by competence, and you will become an indomitable force of nature.

The Essence of Step 3

Use the Four Axis Framework to articulate your desires regarding competency, context, and culture and turn them into a list of possibilities. What do you want to be different, better, or more meaningful? Where does this lead you in terms of desired and potential possibilities? Filter your possibilities to get to probable options.

Break down the gap between your current reality and desired state by understanding the actions you need to take to reach the level of mastery you want over time. Prioritize the actions that feel worth taking and connect to your motivation, and sequence them based on relevant factors such as difficulty, availability, and cost.

Don't Aim for Mediocre

There is someone out there with half your talent but ten times your self-belief making five times the money. 99% of people in the world are convinced that they're incapable of achieving great things, so they aim for mediocrity. Feeling insecure? The rest of the world is too. Do not overestimate the competition and underestimate yourself. You are better than you think.

The Power of Regret: Future-Proofing Your Decisions

You don't want to build your life only to look back and wish you had made different decisions. That's the power of regret: it helps you clarify what matters most before it's too late, and you have an opportunity to harness that power here.

There are four major types of regret:

> Embracing responsibility unlocks the momentum to do what needs to be done. ”

- **Foundational regrets**: “If only I had done the work.” These tend to be small decisions that compound over time and have a significant impact on achieving your goals and creating your identity.
- **Boldness regrets**: “If only I had taken the chance.” These decisions are about *not* making decisions. Today’s procrastination and prevarication, fear and doubt, breed regrets tomorrow.
- **Moral regrets**: “If only I had done the right thing.” These decisions are about being out of alignment or integrity with yourself, such as lying, cheating, or hurting someone.
- **Connection regrets**: “If only I had spent time with so and so ...” Not allocating time to those who matter most in your life—parents, siblings, friends—hurts us over time. This absence can leave a sense of loss, as relationships are a primary source of meaning and context.

As you make decisions about your Next, use these regret categories as lenses to future-proof your decision.

If you’re not sure what you want, ask, “Which choice will I regret not taking?” Then imagine that regret: not “What would I get?” but “What would I feel?” That emotion brings the decision into the present, making it no longer abstract but real and personal. Use this approach to stem the tide of regret before it shapes your future.

Deciding from the Outside In

Another way you might find your Next is to reverse the process. Instead of being driven inductively by your desires and aspirations or designing your Next as a hypothesis, consider letting availability make the decision for you. Be deductive. Put the decision in the hands of the market.

What Are You Not Going to Be Anymore?

A final way you might find your Next is to be reductive. Instead of being driven by your desires and aspirations, you can decide by eliminating what you are no longer willing to do or who you are no longer willing to be. What repels or angers you about your current life? What are you no longer willing to tolerate in yourself or others?

Sometimes, it is easier to see in the negative. Many people use this method to eliminate actions, habits, current competencies, people, and influences from their lives. By doing so, they free themselves to become what they really want.

PART II: GETTING YOUR NEXT

STEP 4

Investigate: Why You?

Good stories don’t just have beginnings, middles, and ends. They are connected by a “why.” They have an arc that brings the listener along, riding the ups and downs of the message. They show a transformation in the protagonist.

Your story is your ticket. Construct it and learn to tell it well. Share it with the right people so they know you and can help. Then focus on building a plan of purposeful actions to make progress, and live your story every day.

Remember that employers and investors are interested in your credibility, relevance, fit, and motivation—all of which make up your value proposition.

Being able to articulate your value proposition is not only for job interviews or investor pitches; it is critical for enlisting the help of others along your journey, whether in a networking, advisory, or other supportive capacity.

Story Development Simplified

To ensure you don’t get lost along the way, here’s the story development process in a nutshell:

1. Clarify your value proposition
2. Frame your story
3. Practice and refine it
4. Expand your channels
5. Seek next-level feedback and conduct A/B testing
6. Field-test your story
7. Iterate until polished
8. Maintain a closed-loop mindset

Connecting Your Value Proposition, Story, and Brand

Your value proposition is the "bones" of your story, why you are distinctive in some way. As you tell your story, the story expresses your brand.

I believe that we have lost sight of what a personal brand means, especially as social media has muddled the notion of brand. A brand is not a few viral pieces of content. It is not a slogan, logo, or color. A personal brand is built on trust. You build that trust with consistent messaging, presentation, and execution. Inconsistency in how you tell your story and how you live it is death by a thousand cuts when it comes to brand.

Your personal value proposition is a brand promise, a promise of trustworthiness made up primarily of your credibility (competency, quality, consistency, and persistence), relevance, values, and motivation.

Your brand expresses your value proposition and tells others:

- This is what I am
- This is what I want
- This is why I am uniquely suited to do this
- This is why I'm interested in this opportunity

You will tell these things in a way that people actually want to hear. You will tell a story they connect with; they want to find out what happens next.

They want to be involved in getting you to your Next. And that's where the magic happens: getting people to help and support you, to open doors for you.

A Multichannel Approach to Telling Your Story

The "who I am," "what I want," and "why me" elements of your story can be plugged and played in various formats for various purposes. These include:

- spoken elevator pitches (short and long versions)
- cover letters and emails
- resumes or CVs
- social media profiles

You do not have to start from scratch with each of these channels. Think of this as a scaffolding process: you have crafted your basic value proposition story and can now build or "remodel" it for different channels and audiences.

Throughout it all, you are keeping in mind that the core of your story is "This is who I am, this is what I want, and this is why me."

STEP 5

Implement: Activate the Plan

Think of this step as consisting of two big buckets of things to know and do. The first is the how—the guiding "meta" core principles that will set you up for success and help you sustain momentum as you develop and activate your plan. The second bucket is the what—actions to take to devise and implement your plan in a logical and manageable order.

Four Core Principles for Career Success

Let's take a deeper dive into the key guiding principles that define the *how* and are vital for successfully activating a plan.

Responsible Mindset

You are entirely responsible and accountable for your success and your actions. You have agency and full ownership of what you do. Embracing this mindset unlocks the forward momentum to do what needs to be done.

Doing Is Becoming

Much of your identity is shaped by what you do for work. In turn, this is influenced by your day-to-day actions and the people you spend time with, your tribe.

Neuroscience shows that identity is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Your brain works constantly to keep you aligned with your current identity. If you are trying to build new habits and achieve new goals but keep falling off, this is why. You have not yet shifted your identity. You will achieve your goals when your identity matches the outcome.

Radical Focus

You can't do multiple things with excellence. You will get confused and fail. Radical focus means deliberately concentrating your energy and resources on the actions that most directly move you toward your Next and saying no to distractions.

Strategy is as much about saying no to things as it is about making the right decisions. In a world filled with competing demands and shiny objects, staying focused on your plan requires discipline. You can build the skill of saying no with these tactics:

- make it short and sweet
- state your values
- know that assertiveness can coexist with respectfulness

Ruthless Execution

This is a concept and methodology developed at and made famous by Cisco. It is focused on rapid, iterative, collaborative,

> If you don't stop to measure success, you won't know when you've won.

and closed-loop planning and execution. As a methodology, ruthless execution has four phases:

1. commitment
2. planning
3. delivery
4. measurement

In practicing this competency, you will break your objective into incremental steps and persist through uncertainty, discomfort, learning curves, boredom, and anything thrown your way. You might need an accountability partner or coach, and that's fine, but you'll keep at it. Like an athlete honing a tennis serve day after day, you will steadily transform.

Mapping the Actions to Activate Your Plan

1. Map your destination—what you want, including short- and long-term goals.
2. Map your destination to channels, or ways to reach them, such as people, groups, forums, and companies.
3. Map those channels to specific individuals and the "doors" they are behind.
4. Map those people and places to messaging that will help you build the right relationships and communicate your story effectively.

PART III: LIVING YOUR NEXT

STEP 6

Increase: Know Your Success

The experience of success without realization, satisfaction, or fulfillment requires diagnosis—an honest reckoning with why many outwardly accomplished people still feel unfulfilled. You may feel successful based on your bank account, your title, or the recognition you receive, yet still feel empty, sad, or full of regret. This paradox of success ultimately depends on perspective.

I've diagnosed six traps or "symptoms" commonly associated with the downside of this success paradox:

- **Deferring happiness**: putting off being happy until some future milestone is reached.
- **Not knowing what you want**: lacking clarity about your life and career, often leading to fixation on one area and a lack of balance.
- **Living someone else's dream**: chasing what others want for you, not what you want.
- **Losing sight of "enough"**: tying identity to achievements and never achieving the mirage of "enough."
- **Achieving loneliness**: reaching the top only to find you're alone there.
- **Not experiencing gratitude**: failing to pause and feel grateful for what you have and what you've been able to do.

These are the common signs of *what* to avoid when pursuing success. The *how* of success is twofold: the active practice of measuring your success with meaningful metrics that matter from your own perspective and of celebrating it in ways that reinforce connection, purpose, and joy. Together, in practice, these will help you not only get what you want but also know it when you do.

Framing Your Success: The Success Thermostat

We all have an inner thermostat for different aspects of our lives, such as career success, personal health, and our relationships with partners and friends.

This concept compares the human tendency to return to a baseline level of success to a home thermostat regulating temperature. This thermostat shapes our view of life experience. It is adjustable, but only with awareness and internal work to shift that perspective.

Success does not erase or solve insecurities; it amplifies them. When we gain success, recognition, fame, or money beyond our conception of self (thermostat), inner conflict emerges, such as imposter syndrome and shame.

Framing Your Success: It's About the Journey

The first step is to know what success is and how you are measuring it. You have to frame it up, which means thinking in terms of progress rather than progression. Progress is

about the small, consistent steps that move you forward. It's the "1% better" mindset: a stoic, patient commitment to the craft, not just the goal.

Progress says, "I am doing. I am learning. I am becoming." Progress, the journey, also becomes your identity (doing is becoming) and so allows you to accept success.

If you don't stop to measure success, you won't know when you've won. You'll keep reaching, striving, and chasing. But if you shift from asking "What did I achieve?" to "What did it mean?" and "What did I learn?" you'll be closer to enjoying true success and feeling fulfilled.

STEP 7

Inspire: Move from I to We

Unless your goal is to be an individual contributor or solo professional practitioner, you'll have to work through and with others to get what you want.

Whether you're trying to launch a new initiative, grow a business, or simply solve a problem, your success will depend on your ability to work in teams. That means leadership of people, and that means moving your skill set and mindset from "I" to "we." This step will help you shift from how you get what you want to how you and others achieve it together.

The Big Idea: Leadership as Relationships

How do you get teams to succeed? How do you lead people? As a leader, you need to provide your teams with both a *know why* and a *care why*.

A leader defines the problem itself, the logical issue or opportunity to be solved, the so-called *know why* that a team needs to understand and apply through individual and collective action. However, the leader also defines and explains the way the team relates to the problem and the solution, the so-called *care why*.

These concepts are critical foundations of leadership and execution and show the shift from I to we and from merely building a plan to leading other humans in successful action and adaptation.

Collaboratively articulating and discussing *know why* and *care why* with your team creates clarity rather than confusion and fosters a shared vision and a sense of shared purpose. Together, these are the foundations of scalable engagement in the shared purpose and trust in you as a leader.

Six Steps for Team Navigation

Understanding what you want as a leader and translating that to your team takes a structured cycle of attention and action.

Here is a six-step framework that will guide you in moving from I to we. This framework will be critical to your success as you go through your first one hundred days in joining a company at a new job or your transition to a new leadership role within a company.

1. **Discover responsibilities and accountabilities**: Clarify exactly what you are responsible and accountable for as a leader. You can do this by understanding how your role links to the company's value creation, operating procedures, and leadership metrics.
2. **Diagnose the external situation**: Take stock of the external environment to understand the current "lay of the land." Every leader operates within a marketplace, and you need a clear-eyed view of where you stand in it. Are you winning or losing against competitors?
3. **Diagnose the internal situation**: Look inward at the reality inside your organization. This is where you check whether your assumptions and plans match what's actually possible.
4. **Design an aspirational situation**: Once you know where you are, the next move is to define what you want, but unlike defining your *own* Next, you are now making decisions together, as a team.
5. **Develop a team interventions plan**: With clarity on the current state and shared aspiration, it's time to build the path. Planning doesn't mean you have all the answers but that you know how to sequence action. Create a plan to close the gap between the current and aspirational states.
6. **Deliver through a team calendar**: Once you've designed the interventions and your use of team modes based on your team's needs, the next step is to anchor all of this to the company calendar. This is about making sure great intentions and well-designed interventions don't get lost in the chaos of day-to-day demands.

The Leadership Choice

You either want to be a leader, or you don't. You have a choice. Leaders are not just custodians of operations; they are catalysts for transformation. Your role goes beyond managing tasks; you are being compensated to empower your team members and elevate their potential. By investing in

their development, you not only enhance individual skills but also foster a culture of continuous growth and innovation.

This is where you find true significance as a leader: creating meaningful change that resonates throughout your organization. Embrace your responsibility to uplift others and watch as your team flourishes.

Conclusion

Those who succeed are not the ones with the most credentials or the best resumes, but those who take purposeful action. They own their calendar, work their relationships, stay focused, and know when to say no. They understand that career success isn't a one-time leap but a series of deliberate moves. Most of all, they take responsibility.

Whether you're still working on Step 2 or have already popped the champagne to celebrate in Step 6, the answer is still the same:

- **Keep being the defining force of your life**. The only thing worse than failing is succeeding at the wrong thing. Continually define what you want, not what others think you should want.
- **Keep practicing purposeful action**. Work the plan; do the reps.
- **Remember that success isn't linear.**
- **Continue building strong relationships**. Nothing worth doing is done alone. Cultivate trust, in others and in yourself.
- **Measure success now, not later**. Understand both what good looks like and how you are getting better every day, week, month, etc.
- **Enjoy the journey**. It may zig and zag, but no matter what, it is doing it every day and enjoying it that will turn it from stress and strain to freedom and expression.

And one more thing: celebrate. Don't wait for permission or aim for perfection. If you've reached a waypoint, mark it. Acknowledge your effort and share it with others. Meaning is not found in achievement alone; it's found in how we make sense of the path.

Whether your Next is around the corner or years away, you have the tools and the insight. You know what you want. You know what to do. You've got this. Just do it.



Julian Lighton is a business strategist, executive coach, and advisor specializing in decision-making, team performance, and scaling organizations. With more than thirty years of experience, he has served as a consultant, C-suite leader, board director, and coach across global companies. His career includes roles at McKinsey & Company, Cisco, Hitachi, and four publicly listed technology firms where he was chief strategy officer. He has led more than thirty mergers and acquisitions and taken companies public and private. Founder of Moo Pie Advisors, he works with leaders and teams worldwide. Lighton holds degrees from Oxford University and Harvard and lives in Silicon Valley.

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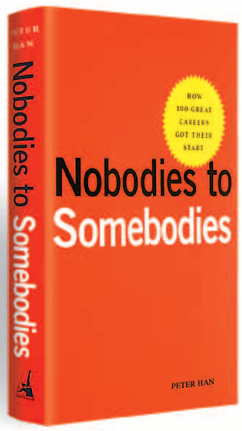
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NobodiesTo Somebodies

Peter Han

SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®

FILE: SUCCESS/ CAREER TECHNIQUES



By Peter Han

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How 100 Great Careers Got Their Start

NOBODIES TO SOMEBODIES

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Novelist Tom Clancy was an insurance agent well into his 40s. He sold his first novel for a pittance to a little-known publisher. Today he's one of the world's most popular authors.

Clancy and many other successful people were once just ordinary Nobodies with talent but little or no experience. They had career interests but few clear goals. They wanted to find work that would be financially rewarding and personally fulfilling — but didn't know how. And they had to overcome all the uncertainty and obstacles of being Nobodies.

This summary explores how many successful people found their true callings in a wide range of fields, and went from Nobodies to Somebodies. Based on interviews with 100 highly accomplished leaders — actors, CEOs, senators, scientists and others — this summary describes the early paths they traveled, the hard choices they made, and the lessons they learned along the way. This summary is also filled with stories of seized opportunity and realized potential, surprising choices and staggering successes. Describing many extremely diverse career paths, it explores common themes and lessons that can help anyone eager to start a satisfying career.

In addition, readers will discover the answers to these questions:

✓ ***How did those 100 leaders choose their professional paths and think of their first jobs?*** *Learn how they worried less about one key formula to discover their destiny — and more about how to be themselves, how to find themselves, and how to translate knowledge of their identity into fruitful work.*

✓ ***Do leaders experience doubt and insecurity?*** *Discover how they used their insecurities and inexperience as extra motivation to spur them to action.*

✓ ***Did Somebodies start out believing they could achieve anything?*** *Find out how the ability to find confidence, which in turn fostered ambition, marked them for success.*

✓ ***Did the 100 Somebodies develop a positive outlook because others treated them well — or treat others well because of their own positive outlook?*** *Learn how it was a little of both. Leaders often have friendly, even magnetic, personalities, which multiply their positive interactions with others, and those experiences reinforce their sociable natures in an ever-repeating virtuous cycle.*

Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries, P.O. Box 1053, Concordville, PA 19331 USA
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NOBODIES TO SOMEBODIES

by Peter Han

— THE *COMPLETE* SUMMARY

Five Paths to Enlightenment

Among the 100 Somebodies who were interviewed, there were five methods for self-discovery, depending on how much freedom an individual had in taking a first job, the extent to which he or she believed in one clear professional destiny (versus several options), and the degree to which he or she managed career development. These methods are:

1. Random Walk involves no aggressive, purposeful search for meaning. Those who found their calling this way benefited from luck and, while talented and passionate, did not start their first jobs with anxiety about their careers.

2. Open-Ended Exploration means more openness to the possibility that you are meant to do one particular thing.

3. Closed-Ended Exploration means beginning a first job with specific aims. Leaders who discovered themselves this way started with a fairly clear idea of their ambitions, wants, needs and passions. They often evaluated potential career paths via specific criteria.

4. Killer Excellence After Expedience. Many leaders began their careers with choices determined by expedience, usually financial or familial. They started with mundane jobs but displayed strong competence and boosted themselves into positions of steadily ascending responsibility.

5. Trailblazing leaders were the individuals least willing to fit themselves to conventional career paths. They really wanted to find work that suited them, and created new jobs, companies, or market niches for themselves. ■

Run Toward Yourself, Not Away

How did the 100 leaders practice self-discovery and identity formation? Here are seven ways they did it:

● **Strong Self-Awareness.** They often started their careers — and made decisions about their careers — with significant self-knowledge, stemming from instinct or introspection. Their understanding of their own likes, dislikes, strengths and weaknesses were particularly insightful.

Senator Bill Bradley did a variety of things during the off-seasons of his NBA career, including advertising, politics and writing. He advises, "Develop your self-knowledge so that you're doing something you really want to do and not because other people thought you should do it."

The 100 Somebodies gained independence from their initial preconceptions about life and work, ideas that may have been instilled by parents or early childhood experiences. Rather than relying automatically on advice and direction from others, they made sure that their work fit them and their individual tastes.

● **Play Toward Strengths and Away From Weaknesses.** The Somebodies were able to put their egos aside and see themselves clearly enough to know what they are not good at — and leverage their strengths. They weren't afraid to develop lopsided capabilities to gain a competitive advantage.

● **Authenticity and Integrity.** "Authenticity" is alignment between your underlying character and your statements and actions. "Integrity" is the consistency of those words and deeds, from one day to another and across different situations. You must be in touch with yourself, and you must be yourself, because if you're not, it will be immediately obvious to everyone around you.

● **Pragmatic Decision-Making Processes.** Some of the Somebodies made very rapid career decisions; others took much longer to navigate a key crossroads. But many relied on gut instinct — on trusting themselves and not getting overly bogged down in analyzing the pros and cons of every possible contingency. This instinct rested on strong self-knowledge.

Leaders aren't necessarily faster or slower or more logical than average people in their decision-making. Leaders' decision-making stands out due to three factors: their clarity of self-knowledge; their tendency to act decisively once decisions are made; and their ability to con-

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Summarized by arrangement with Portfolio, a member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc. from Nobodies to Somebodies by Peter Han. Copyright © Peter Han, 2005. 233 pages. $22.95. ISBN 1-59184-086-4.

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For additional information on the author, go to: http://my.summary.com

Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries (ISSN 0747-2196), P.O. Box 1053, Concordville, PA 19331 USA, a division of Concentrated Knowledge Corp. Published monthly. Subscriptions: $209 per year in the United States, Canada and Mexico, and $295 to all other countries. Periodicals postage paid at Concordville, Pa., and additional offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Soundview, P.O. Box 1053, Concordville, PA 19331. Copyright © 2006 by Soundview Executive Book Summaries.

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Run Toward Yourself, Not Away

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duct internal dialogues, continually assimilating new information and ideas from the wider world.

● **Pay the Rent First, Conquer the World Later.** When the Somebodies were Nobodies, their egos weren't inflated by mystical confidence and grandiose visions. They did not start their first jobs with detailed maps to the top. They thought about paying the bills and perhaps starting to save; they were laying the foundations of their lives, without necessarily knowing how the full blueprint would look.

Many had nursed quiet but intense hopes, clear glimmers of ambition, as they took their first jobs. But those dreams had to compete with more immediate concerns. Idleness was not an option; their families weren't affluent enough for them to spend time deciding what they wanted to be when they grew up.

● **Coping With Insecurities — and Using Them for Motivation.** The 100 leaders, like so many of us, had to cope with basic insecurities and inexperience. They truly were Nobodies and did not sail through work and life without doubts. Many shared stories of early uncertainty; anxiety before big meetings; and hard, lonely work.

Years before he won the Nobel Prize, English cancer researcher Paul Nurse had to fight off depression and low motivation — so much so that he contemplated other careers. But his colleagues helped get him through.

Leaders do have their periods of doubt and insecurity, but they get past them. Some use their insecurities and inexperience as extra motivation to spur them to action.

● **From Paying Rent to Conquering the World.** Even with the pressures of day-to-day responsibilities and bills, the Somebodies didn't completely abandon their dreams and hopes. At work, they often spotted opportunities — or created them for themselves — and jumped on them. Some admitted to simply being ignorant because of their inexperience; not knowing the conventional wisdom, they could ignore it. ■

Become the Big Fish by Mastering the Small Pond

How did leaders gain the confidence to raise their sights?

When Pulitzer Prize-winner Alan Miller was a reporter covering a small suburb of Albany, N.Y., an editor told him, "One day you will cover Moscow better than anyone else because today you've covered Colonie better than anyone."

The confidence to achieve great things springs from successful achievement of smaller tasks. Confidence is a delicate thing — even for the most accomplished leaders, it can be fleeting and difficult to maintain in the face of the world's indifference or outright rejection.

It's critically important to success, yet elusive — particularly for people just starting their careers. The 100 Somebodies didn't start their first jobs with the belief that they could achieve anything. Rather, what marked them for success was the ability to find confidence, which in turn fostered the ambition. The basic pattern was the same: Achieve small successes in local settings, then use the knowledge, contacts and confidence from those experiences to replicate successes on a broader scale.

Many of the 100 Somebodies remembered their first jobs vividly. Years or even decades later, they recall seemingly unimportant events, conversations and people who influenced their crucial first steps and prepared them for future success. With the confidence gained from those early jobs, they had the strength to follow their intuitions instead of conventional wisdom — to make moves, to advance their new ideas, and to fight for their beliefs. It was this steady, quiet, but often fierce confidence in the face of adversity that truly built their careers and got them through difficult career transitions.

Some of the leaders said that their success came from a natural optimism and self-confidence. But most needed to become big fish by swimming in small ponds. ■

For additional information on an inspirational quote from former Texas Governor Ann Richards, go to: http://my.summary.com

Learn When to Stay and When to Go

What career moves did the Somebodies make, and why?

They loved their work first and foremost, and didn't particularly relish fancy career maneuvers among jobs or organizations. But they did develop the following savvy ways to manage their career development:

● **Patience — or Lack Thereof.** The Somebodies were patient in their approaches to their first jobs. Some left within a couple of months when the job was obviously a poor fit. But many stayed longer, even for decades.

Some were quite aware of their progress relative to typical milestones of age. Others didn't feel the need to agitate for promotion or new types of work, as their careers naturally evolved on their own.

Keyspan CEO Bob Catell worked at Brooklyn Union for 15 years before he became an officer. But he says that he was "enjoying every job. One of the basic principles I tried to follow in every job I had was to do the best I could in that job. I also never really worried about the politics. I figured if I did a good job, that would be recognized, and that would provide an opportunity for advancement."

Although not all leaders are blessed with natural patience, a number of them learned to cultivate it.

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Learn When to Stay and When to Go

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● **Varying Tenure at a First Job.** Some of the 100 leaders committed to a job or company for at least five and often more than 10 years. Earning the helm of a large corporate enterprise or government institution requires specific knowledge and contacts, and a personal gravity built only through repeated demonstration of competence over time.

In certain fields, such as arts and entertainment or to a lesser degree science, leaders often had more career mobility: When opportunity knocked, they answered. And in business, when people stayed put, it was usually because their jobs had morphed into virtually new roles.

It was rare to find leaders who had simply dedicated themselves to a particular job or institution and never wavered from their initial paths. The key to longevity was rotation through different roles. The chance to try new activities and to learn new skills kept the future Somebodies interested and engaged.

What Compelled Departure From First Jobs?

Despite valuable lessons learned in those early jobs, the most common reason for departure was limited opportunity for advancement and professional growth.

Symbol Technologies CEO Bill Nuti left the security of a career at IBM — a difficult decision — to develop more rapidly at another company.

A common element in career moves was a hunger for excellence, which became part of the Somebodies' identities and motivated them to overcome obstacles. ■

Learn How to Stay and How to Go

What kinds of moves did top achievers make?

Actor John Lithgow left his father's small theater company for the ultra-competitive marketplace of New York. Like other leaders, he sought visibility, broad functional expertise, and positions that would stretch his capabilities rather than simply being good "résumé builders." Above all, he was thoughtful and made conscious trade-offs in an effort to reach his goals.

● **Raising Professional Visibility.** Leaders often showed a knack for getting noticed early in their careers and using the extra visibility to learn about or create new opportunities for themselves.

But not all visibility stemmed directly from work. Curt Culver, now CEO of MGIC, started his career at a smaller mortgage insurance company and gained extra exposure to the CEO on the golf course because he'd been a competitive collegiate golfer.

● **Cultivation of Broad Functional Expertise.** Fortune 100 CEOs often pointed to cross-functional perspective as a key aim of early jobs.

Kirk Thompson, the CEO of trucking company JB Hunt, joined the company for his first job when it was much smaller. His skills grew with the company. He says, "[T]he fact that I'd done so many different things [in growing the company] broadened my perspective and allowed me to be, I think, more ready and prepared for the CEO job, as opposed to somebody who was in a single-line trajectory."

Of course, the lessons from cross-functional learning weren't always easy. Staples CEO Ron Sargent worked at Kroger's grocery company after getting a Harvard MBA, and spent time cutting up meat in a frigid meat department.

● **Stretching Capabilities, Even If It Means Sacrificing Some Glamour.** The 100 Somebodies often chose roles that offered high growth, even at the expense of high glamour. They recognized the need to expand their capabilities and shouldered unusual responsibilities.

In business, this often means starting at line positions. Direct responsibility for a specific segment of a business breeds accountability and strategic thinking in a way that a staff position cannot.

Many business leaders specifically sought line management experience. Future Raytheon CEO Daniel Burnham did this, and even took a $20,000 pay cut.

● **Conscious Management of Career Moves.** Some of the 100 relied on sustained, strong performance, with faith in mentors and meritocracy. A few others saw their career in terms of free spirit, intense passions and lucky breaks. But most acknowledged some level of conscious planning.

They didn't practice precise, structured career planning. Life is too unpredictable. They had a general awareness of their career goals — and a hope of fulfilling them — but they didn't know how close they would actually come.

Many leaders achieved visibility within their organizations or fields, developed versatility in their roles, challenged themselves with capacity-stretching jobs, and made thoughtful career choices. But thoughtfulness shouldn't be confused with risk aversion. The Somebodies didn't always take the preset, obvious, well-beaten path — far from it. They displayed an impressive flexibility early in their careers — an ability to read situations, react to them, and change paths as opportunity rose or fell. ■

Don't Let Old Plans Get in the Way of New Opportunities — or Luck

Many of the 100 had stories of jumping off the beaten track to try fortuitous new possibilities. They were neither risk-averse nor swashbuckling. But they had a good sense of when and how to take risks. Sometimes they considered it a risk not to try something new. Others had a casual openness to new possibilities.

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Listening to Inner Voices and Intuitions; Following Dreams

Felix Zandman, the CEO of Vishay Intertechnology, wanted to start a company around an industrial technology he'd created in his spare time: "I quit a very important job ... And I went on my own! So it was just an internal feeling that I [had] invented something important, and I felt that I had to do it."

Whether through inner intuitions or more obvious external stimuli, leaders learned from their experiences — and adjusted their behavior. They frequently found success by adjusting to new, unexpected paths.

Don't Let Old Plans Get in the Way of New Opportunities — or Luck

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Many of the Somebodies' best moments came from reacting to the unexpected. Chemist Harold Kroto, who won a Nobel Prize though he never consciously sought it, says, "I do the sort of science that interests me. I think if you do that, and do the work to the very best of your ability, the serendipity will take care of itself."

While the Somebodies did enjoy interesting opportunities and to some degree good luck, they also, at critical junctures, made decisions that were *right for them*, even if those decisions contradicted conventional wisdom. ■

For additional information on a quote on risk by UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy, go to: http://my.summary.com

Work Hard, Work Smart, And Work Some More

All of the 100 Somebodies have a huge appetite for work and hands-on experience. Not all of them chose their hard-won experience. Some were pushed into situations that demanded action and difficult effort. But they responded to the opportunities and worked hard at pursuing them. Here are the different aspects of their orientation to action:

- **Once Decisions Are Made, Decisive Action.** The leaders described an impressive capacity to throw overwhelming resources and attention — everything they had, essentially — at the challenge.
- **Sheer Relentlessness and Dogged Work Ethic.** After a long career and three Pulitzer Prizes, photographer William Snyder says, "Most people in my business ... obviously the intelligence is there. But the thing that separates people who are successful from people who are not successful or are not that successful, is just the ability and the desire to work that much harder, and to make appropriate sacrifices. I sacrificed a lot of things."
- **Smart Work — Recognizing Key Moments, and Seizing Initiative.** Many of the 100 told how they recognized key moments and rose to the challenge by working smart — through extensive preparation, the ability to relax under pressure, or simply better execution and stronger will — or seizing the initiative by working at self-created tasks that solved pressing problems.

Journalist Bill Dietrich explains that he had to complete what turned out to be an award-winning series, on his own time, because his editor wasn't interested.

- **Excellence in the Task at Hand.** Says Senator Chuck Hagel: "[D]on't paralyze yourself by planning too far out. I've seen too many people make too many mistakes tripping over what's in front of them now, by reaching too far, and thinking too much about future and consequences. I've always believed that you should enjoy as much as you can what you're doing today, and if you do enjoy it, you believe you're doing something that's worthy, and you're doing it the best you can, the future always takes care of itself. Life connects. The thing that you're doing at that time puts you in a certain universe — that's a universe of contacts, of relationships, of awareness, of knowledge. That always comes together in a way that presents opportunity." ■

Be Productively Competitive

Somebodies almost always have a strong drive to be the best in their field. Sometimes that drive is triggered by a minor event, such as when former Raytheon CEO Daniel Burnham discovered that a colleague at his level was making $100 more each month than he was making.

Competitiveness can appear as a desire for independence from the whims of others, as with Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Deborah Blum. Tired of having her assignments dictated by others, she returned to graduate school to get her master's degree and give her career a new direction.

Somebodies have mental compasses that point upward. They weren't necessarily egotistical in an offensive way, but they used their pride to push themselves to do better and to reach higher. ■

Find the Social Animal Within

Almost all of the 100 Somebodies, whether introverted or extroverted, benefited from relationships.

Most were outgoing people who engaged others easily and often. Even in more solitary fields like science, the arts and entertainment, achievers gained great benefit from their ability to teach others, to be taught, to communicate clearly, and to establish relationships of trust and caring.

Their good cheer and enjoyment of relationships is genuine, not a disguise for political advantage. Says scientist Rich Roberts, "If you yourself are prepared to be cooperative and helpful, it brings out the best in other people."

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Find the Social Animal Within

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Did the 100 Somebodies develop a positive outlook because others treated them well — or treat others well because of their own positive outlook? A little of both. Leaders often have friendly, even magnetic, personalities, which multiplied their positive interactions with others, and those experiences reinforce their sociable natures in an ever-repeating virtuous cycle. Whether for intellectual stimulation, job referrals, competitive inspiration, or other social support, the Somebodies depended heavily on relationships. This dependence may explain why so many understood the importance of a cooperative approach to persuasion, as opposed to the command-and-control model. There are four ways they performed their relationship magic.

1. The Common Touch, or Likability. During interviews, the 100 Somebodies typically came off as remarkably humble, approachable and friendly.

'You Treat People Right'

Says Daniel Burnham, the former CEO of Raytheon, "The people you're working with may not have graduate degrees, but I look at them, and I see my mother, my cousins, my friends growing up. I think they're regular people. I treat them all the same. Not because I'm trying to manipulate them, but because that's the way to lead: You treat people right, treat them fairly, and most of them will respond and push toward goals."

2. Reciprocity. The Somebodies consistently practiced the proverbial Golden Rule, treating others as they would want to be treated. They would go the extra mile for others, and others would respond with extra effort for them.

3. Communications Skills. The Somebodies were able to express their thoughts effectively, orally or in writing, even in less obviously social fields such as science. If public speaking did not come naturally to them, they acquired the necessary skills in order to focus people's attention on important priorities and to build acceptance for their ideas.

4. Savvy With Organizational Behavior and Politics. Political savvy includes several qualities in different contexts: sensitivity to others' feelings, awareness of who really controlled particular decisions, and intuition about which points would be most persuasive to different stakeholders in a given argument.

The 100 leaders understood how to move others by effectively employing communications, reciprocity and personability at the right times. Even those who are uncomfortable with office politics came to understand how their working environment was structured — and how opportunities fall to some and not others.

> "I had this horse who could not stand to have anyone in front of him. ... [Y]ou would just walk up alongside of him, and he'd take off running. I love that attitude. That's kind of the way I am. I don't like to be in the pack. I want to be out front. ... I like leading."
>
> *Jim Hagedorn, CEO of Scotts Co.*

Relationship to Institutions

Not all leaders embraced institutions wholeheartedly. Writers such as Tom Hallman and Paul Salopek did not invest themselves in climbing organizational ladders. Even a consummate business and government insider like Bill Ruckelshaus avoided entering business early in his career precisely because he saw many of the same disadvantages to the professional rat race that today's young people do. Ruckelshaus says, "[I]nstitutions are no better or worse than the people that run them."

Others also expressed a fundamental pragmatism. Former Congressman and Cabinet Secretary Dan Glickman admits that "the longer I was [in Congress], the more I became part of the system. [W]hen you're part of an institution for a very long period of time, to be effective, you have to go along periodically."

Institutions help career development by acting as talent magnets. They attract a wide variety of people and allow them to interact, work together and grow together. As the 100 Nobodies became Somebodies, they often became part of mutually helpful groups of like-minded others. Institutions helped them find those groups.

Institutions also helped by conferring credentials, a kind of institutional pedigree that introduces potential Somebodies to future audiences.

And institutions teach certain philosophies or methods of work that the organization has developed successfully. Paul Norris, CEO of WR Grace, learned management theory under Larry Bossidy, himself a GE disciple.

Thus, institutions can help a young person's career more than he or she might realize, especially by facilitating important relationships. ■

Keep Learning, No Matter Who the Teacher Is

The 100 Somebodies were unusually good at finding, cultivating and learning from mentors who helped them avoid the pitfalls of early career growth. With few exceptions, they did not maintain lifelong mentors but took counsel from many situational teachers. Some acknowledged that tying oneself too closely to one mentor either limited independent development or promoted office politicking.

They also learned from negative role models, including bosses and colleagues with whom there were serious personality clashes. ■

Go Crazy in the Office, But Stay Sane at Home

Most — but not all — of the 100 Somebodies worked extremely hard early in their careers, sacrificing balance to productivity and achievement. Some indicated that imbalance continued to the present day — but of this group, some contended that their "lack of balance" by other people's standards fit nicely with their own personal tastes and values.

> "[T]here is a lot of office politics. There always is. I think that was my rudest awakening in the work world, to be honest with you. It wasn't just about who has the best idea or who's working the hardest. I mean, things weren't just based on merit, you know? You had to schmooze the right person."
>
> *April Saul, Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer*

Others actually had maintained balance in their lives — and outlined specific ways in which they became more effective professionally when they devoted time and attention to nonwork activities.

Although they had a wide array of opinions on work-life balance, the underlying commonality was an uncompromising work ethic in their early jobs.

Most relied on coping mechanisms that generally fell into the following four categories:

1. Relying on Spouse. A strikingly high number of male Somebodies mentioned their spouses in glowing terms, pointed to them as bedrocks of stability, and generally showed a heavy reliance on them for emotional and career support. A high percentage had remained with their original partners, or at least had been in marriages stretching multiple decades. Many told wholesome stories of romance and of marrying their school-age sweethearts.

2. Preserving Family Rituals and Activities. Another way to promote work-life balance was to create and/or preserve family rituals, especially attendance at key events in their children's lives.

3. Sacrificing Nonfamily Activities. The 100 Somebodies also reduced nonfamily socializing and leisure, giving up sports, or becoming extremely compartmentalized and efficient. AutoZone CEO Steve Odland to this day avoids scheduling business meetings in the evening, and makes other sacrifices with his wife to improve the quality of their lives with their children.

4. Recognizing the Benefits of Balance. Recognizing the necessity of balance actually helps to maintain it. For the Somebodies, it offers psychological comfort, essential grounding to their lives, and, in some cases, an empathy to human experiences and feelings that was essential to productive work. Photographer William Snyder notes that "if you don't have your own life, if you don't have something away from work, you're not going to be able to do your work as well. You're not going to be able to be successful." ■

Willpower and Passion

The magic ingredient in the recipe for success of the 100 Somebodies is a burning intensity. They all had an abundance of sheer willpower — the ability to focus and to translate determination to action — and a positive energy that appeared as passion or optimism.

Willpower and passion disrupt the simple equation between inputs and outputs — and somehow produce something from nothing. Says Senator Chuck Hagel, "[O]ne thing I am sure of the older I get is that individuals can talk themselves into anything, and they can talk themselves out of anything. The human mind is a powerful, powerful dynamic ..."

Not only were the 100 Somebodies unusually skilled in finding ways around obstacles — their desire to succeed helped them *identify* those obstacles. Rarely did they waste their attention and energy on trivial goals. Typically, through instinct, they realized the importance of tackling larger problems and not settling for easy paths.

They positioned themselves in front of opportunity by focusing on the difficult problems and issues in their field or organization.

> "Beyond my own admitted 'workaholism' anyone who is successful in life knows that it takes an incredible amount of work and many sacrifices along the way. There is no free lunch in life. I do my best to balance."
>
> *William Nuti, CEO of Symbol Technologies*

- **The American Dream.** Many of the leaders unabashedly expressed their love of America and its value system. Several specifically mentioned the American Dream and their confidence in the overall system by which this country runs. Many told stories of humble starts in life, followed by self-improvement through education.

Besides living the fundamentals of honesty, fair play, hard work, and high ambition, the leaders consciously trusted the basic system of cause-and-effect, effort-and-reward that runs our society.

- **Passion for Subject Matter.** Almost all of the leaders reported a very strong attraction to the simple experience of what they were doing. This enjoyment, not the accolades, was what drove them to their achievements.

Grammy-winning songwriter Tia Sillers says, "Just give me a guitar and a pen, and I'm happy. Music gives me meaning in life."

- **Passion for Intense Experiences in Their Own Right.** Many of the Somebodies described intense feelings

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Willpower and Passion

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or experiences that they'd had, and their thirst for the intensity itself. They enjoyed something inherent in their work and in their own reactions to those experiences that called out their passions and consumed their energy and attention.

Kathleen Ligocki, now CEO of Tower Automotive, took her first lengthy job at a General Motors plant when she was still in her 20s. She says, "[I]t was such an exciting situation — 5,000 people in a closed environment, responsible for producing over a million parts a year. It was just very intense, very exciting. ... To be honest, I fell in love with the work the first day I walked into the plant."

- **Passion for Ideals.** Millard Fuller, founder of Habitat for Humanity, speaks of a magical energy and life force that drive him to do philanthropic work: He gave away almost all of his money before he started Habitat for Humanity. Other leaders were motivated by religion, concern for the environment, or the general idealism of the 1960s.
- **Positive Approach to Life.** The Somebodies' willpower and passions made them very positive people. They drove hard for their goals, had high ambitions, and were passionate about their lives. This fundamentally forward-leaning posture influenced everything they did.

The effect of a positive outlook was not to ignore reality and float through life in a heedlessly happy bubble, but rather to sustain strong self-confidence. Writer Michael Vitez, referring to a difficult choice between two jobs, says, "I believe life would have been exciting and rewarding whichever path I had taken, because I was optimistic and enthusiastic and had a good attitude." ■

Things Don't Have to End Where They Begin

The Somebodies believe that life is an organic, change-filled process, constantly dynamic, and things rarely end where they began. Personal and professional growth was part of each Somebody's story about his or her early career.

- **Adaptability and Self-Improvement.** After a strong career start, the Somebodies continued to build their skills and reputations by adapting to environmental change (responding to some elements of their company, industry or profession) and initiating change in themselves via an expansion of skills or other personal growth.
- **Intellectual Curiosity.** Another factor in the Somebodies' ability for self-improvement was the mental stimulation and problem-solving that came with work.
- **Failure.** Many of the top achievers failed early in their careers. Failure forced them to recognize the need for change and to react accordingly. They didn't necessarily make better short-term decisions than average people — or fewer mistakes. They did grow from their mistakes more than the average person, and they repeated them less often.

They welcomed failure as part of the growth process. They also regard failure as a teacher of the importance of resilience.

- **Reasons for Pulling Back.** In many situations, the Somebodies scaled back their grand ambitions. Not all career movement is forward. Sometimes the path not taken can be as valuable as the one actually followed.

At key points, the 100 Somebodies showed the ability to alter their ambitious plans, to refrain from certain opportunities. For photographer April Saul, the offer of a high-profile but dangerous assignment in Bosnia presented her with a career decision about what she was and was not willing to do. She declined.

No Cookbook for Success

These people who ascended to the top rungs of various establishment ladders also remained open to their own unconventional notions and ideas. They didn't assume that certain starting points in life must lead to certain ending points. They didn't follow pre-programmed career tracks or accept others' assumptions. Above all, they understood and practiced constant growth and personal reinvention.

Success isn't a matter of simply applying the traits, habits or practices of the 100 Somebodies. Each quality works differently for different leaders — or for the same leader at different points in his or her career. There's no such thing as automatic results.

The 100 Somebodies built highly respectable bodies of work, often over decades, by using the human intangibles of timing and wisdom, and by understanding when something made sense for them and when it did not. More than raw intelligence, their ability to know themselves and remain flexible to necessary changes propelled their careers, from the first job on. These qualities were the closest thing to a secret sauce in leaders' recipes for success. ■

SOUNDVIEW RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Nobodies to Somebodies*, you'll also like:

1. ***Good to Great* by Jim Collins.** Collins used strict benchmarks to identify a group of 11 elite companies that made the leap from good to great and sustained that greatness for at least 15 years.
2. ***Leading Quietly* by Joseph L. Badaracco Jr.** Badaracco studies and celebrates successful low-profile leaders.
3. ***Comeback* by Martin Puris.** Editor Puris offers the stories of eight top executives, including Robert Louis-Dreyfus of sportswear firm Adidas, and Eckard Pfeiffer of Compaq Computer Corp., who turned their companies around.
4. ***What Really Works* by William Joyce, Nitin Nohria and Bruce Roberson.** The authors describe the results of a 10-year study that turned 50 academics and business consultants loose on dozens of companies, to find out what really works.
5. ***Maximum Leadership* by Charles M. Farkas and Philippe De Backer.** The authors interviewed CEOs the world over with one goal in mind: To discover how they add value to their companies.

For additional information on Tower Automotive CEO Kathleen Ligocki's take on resilience, go to: http://my.summary.com

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Ordinary to Extra-Ordinary

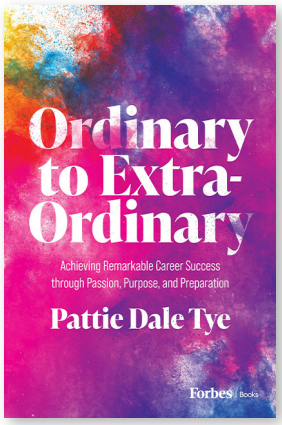
Pattie Dale Tye

Executive Book Summaries®

Ordinary to Extra-Ordinary

Achieving Remarkable Career Success Through Passion, Purpose, and Preparation

by **Pattie Dale Tye**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Do you feel stuck in the middle of the career ladder? Are you wondering why none of your efforts help make a difference? Have you tried various strategies and followed so-called career gurus' advice, with zero visible results? Maybe you do not have to focus on the strategy to grow professionally. Perhaps you need to focus on yourself.

In her book, ***Ordinary to Extra-Ordinary: Achieving Remarkable Career Success Through Passion, Purpose, and Preparation***, Pattie Dale Tye, the COO of Stoll Keenon Ogden PLLC, shares her insights and experiences to guide readers in achieving career success. She wrote this book for people at various stages of their career journeys, from the newbie just joining the workforce, to professionals re-entering the workforce or in the later stages of their professional careers.

IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY:

- Building a career is all about the journey, not the destination.
- Professional growth takes time, so don't get discouraged if you don't see immediate results.
- If you add value to everything you do, you will reap the rewards.
- You should strive to maintain interest and curiosity in your line of work.
- A career is not only about the money.

Chapter 1: Shout-Out to the 98 Percent

It is a fact that most of the people in the workforce feel that they are being overshadowed by societal pressures that glorify only the elite achievers—the so-called top 2 percent. However, being part of the "98 percent" does not limit one's potential for an extraordinary career.

Even I, with my long track record of corporate success, am part of the 98 percent club, with nothing extraordinary to show for during y childhood and formative years. Only through self-awareness, risk-taking, hard work, and resilience, did I manage to create an extraordinary life and career.

The most important thing is finding what "lights you up"—the passions and interests that energize and inspire you. It is important to note that this discovery is not necessarily linked to your innate abilities or prior achievements. Instead, it is about identifying pursuits that stir curiosity, spark joy, and ignite a sense of purpose.

Thus, everyone should take the time to explore their curiosities and ask introspective questions, such as:

- What activities make me lose track of time?
- What problems do I feel compelled to solve?
- What makes me feel fulfilled and motivated?

The other theme is the importance of relationships and acknowledging that you cannot achieve success on your own. You have to build a network you can rely on and seek a mentor who will help you grow professionally.

Building the right network from the early years of your career will lead to a life-long connection with people who can nurture you, celebrate your successes or help you change tack in your career.

Also, while working hard, you don't have to forget to take care of yourself and know how to set your priorities. Using the Eisenhower Matrix, you can separate tasks as urgent vs. non-urgent and important vs. non-important. In this matrix, your health and well-being must always be important and urgent.

Finally, keep in mind that trust is paramount in business. Business strategist David Horsager has developed a system with which he teaches leaders how to build the "Eight Pillars of Trust":

- Clarity—People trust the clear and mistrust the ambiguous.
- Compassion—People put faith in those who care beyond themselves.
- Character—People notice those who do what is right over what is easy.
- Competency—People have confidence in those who stay fresh, relevant, and ca
- Commitment—People believe in those who stand through adversity.
- Connection—People want to follow, buy from, and be around friends.
- Contribution—People immediately respond to results.
- Consistency—People love to see the little things done consistently.

Without trust, there can be no relationship on any level – personal or in business. And to build others' trust in you, you must stand by helping them achieve their career and business goals. However, do not see this as a transaction – I help you so you must help me. Instead, see it as a long-term relationship-nurturing process.

Chapter 2: Everything Ladders Up

The concept of "laddering up" is a powerful metaphor for career growth. This concept is similar to playing with LEGO blocks, where each piece supports and strengthens the complete structure.

According to this concept, no experience should be considered irrelevant. Also, every career step has the potential to provide new insights, skills, or connections that enhance future opportunities. Every job, skill, or relationship forms a critical "rung" on the ladder of success, creating a cohesive journey where nothing is wasted.

The idea of "laddering up" expands the traditional notion of climbing the career ladder, which is often perceived as a solitary pursuit. Instead, this process is collaborative and multidimensional. Here is a detailed explanation of what laddering up means:

1. Leveraging every role and experience to build toward the next opportunity.
2. Fostering mutual benefit—helping others succeed while advancing one's own career.
3. Recognizing that personal and professional growth are interconnected.

...even if your career path seems nonlinear or inconsistent, a deeper examination will reveal a common thread—skills, passions, or values that remain constant throughout your journey.

One of the core principles of laddering up is that success is not a solitary endeavor. It is important to lift others as you advance, ensuring a ripple effect of progress. This approach aligns with the philosophy of mentorship, where guiding others in their careers enriches the mentor's journey as well.

Also, even if your career path seems nonlinear or inconsistent, a deeper examination will reveal a common thread—skills, passions, or values that remain constant throughout your journey. These recurring elements create continuity and cohesion, enabling you to draw on your strengths across various roles and industries.

As an example, I have always been passionate about solving problems and helping others succeed. Whether working in insurance, furniture sales, or healthcare, this core value remained central to my approach. So, you should identify your own "light-me-up" skills and talents and focus on nurturing them, as these attributes often form the foundation for long-term success.

At this point, it is necessary to tackle the issue of career mistakes. Rushing through career decisions or pursuing opportunities for the wrong reasons can lead to setbacks. You should not be in a rush for career advancement. Growing your career is likened to running a marathon rather than a sprint.

Thus, it is essential to stay in roles long enough to fully develop skills, build networks, and maximize learning opportunities. By resisting the urge to rush to the next position, you can deepen your expertise and strengthen the connections that will support you later in your career.

Chapter 3: The Discomfort of the New

Discomfort plays a critical role in personal and professional growth. While stepping into unfamiliar territory can be frightening, or at least daunting, it is often the key to unlocking opportunities and achieving extraordinary outcomes.

Overcoming discomfort is possible through the learning curve, which represents the process of learning from mistakes.

Everyone has a learning curve, which essentially has four stages:

1. You don't know what you don't know – as you step into a new role, you are still unaware of all the things you need to learn and all the tasks you are supposed to do.
2. You know what you don't know – as you start getting familiarized with the new job, you become aware of what you still need to learn and what is required of you.
3. You learn everything about what you don't know – either throu7gh mentoring, a hands-on attitude, or taking supplementary courses.
4. What you didn't know is what you now know and do – this is when you start being recognized as an experienced professional and an authority in your field of work.

You should embrace the discomfort of the initial stage and trust that it will lead to eventual growth and success. Instead of fearing it, welcome it as the start of something extra-ordinary for your future.

To achieve this, you should start by creating your 90-day plan after you accept a new role. This plan must have actionable steps for each of your first 90 days in the new role. A few examples of these steps include:

- Determine what you need to accomplish.
- Make the most of every meeting.
- Set SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) goals.
- Learn everything about the company culture, goals and challenges.
- Build relationships.
- Keep your plan flexible and adapt it as needed.
- Be a team player, not a lone ranger.

Also, it is important to remember that success does not just

happen. You have to plan to succeed. This involves:

- Making a lasting impression from the start – only the President of the U.S. has 100 days to do something, you have only 90.
- Building relationships by nurturing trust with your colleagues and superiors.
- Understanding that you do not have to be the smartest in the organization, you just have to do your best.
- Building your personal brand, which will define your professional reputation.
- Visualizing yourself as successful in the role.
- Being authentic in everything you do.

Women are more likely to suffer from the impostor syndrome than men: statistics show that as many as 75% of women in executive positions have experienced this syndrome at some point in their careers.

The solution is that women should focus the hardest on embracing the idea that nobody is perfect. Instead, they should accept their discomfort in a new role, keep reminding themselves what they have achieved so far, and "click off" the inner voice that tries to discourage them.

Finally, it is essential to remember that finances are not everything in a rewarding career. You should not refuse a new role, just because it is not a direct promotion. Instead, plan three moves ahead, just like a chess player. This mindset can help you achieve the level of success you envision, even if you don't get the right raise or promotion when you want it.

Chapter 4: The Money Will Come

It's important to shift focus from the pursuit of financial gain to the pursuit of passion and purpose in building a career. While acknowledging that financial stability is important, it is essential to accept that chasing money alone often leads to dissatisfaction and unfulfilled potential.

Many people are reluctant to accept a new job that offers lower pay compared to their current role. Even if the new job is better aligned with their goals and with what lights them up, they refuse to take this chance. However, those who have the courage to make this change, end up with a better paying job, and a truly rewarding career.

This is why you should always prioritize finding work that aligns with your values, interests, and long-term goals, because ultimately financial rewards naturally follow when you focus on meaningful contributions and personal growth.

To this end, it is important to address a common misconception: the belief that financial success equals career success. There is no question that financial security is essential. But using money as the sole measure of success can lead to:

- Burnout from pursuing roles or industries that don't align with one's interests or values.
- A lack of fulfillment, even when financial goals are achieved.
- Missed opportunities to explore careers that provide personal and professional growth, but may not initially offer the highest salary.

Passion fuels purpose, which, in turn, drives success. Identifying what excites and motivates you—whether it involves solving complex problems, helping others, or creating something innovative—is the true foundation for a fulfilling career.

Making a lateral move in your career – one that does not take you to a better paying, but a more meaningful position – is the smart thing to do. This approach helps you become an expert and develop the right soft skills that help you achieve success.

To become an expert, you have to:

- Identify your career traps.
- Define your purpose.
- Document your unique skills and create your selling statement.
- Seize opportunities to expand yourself.

Equally important is to cultivate soft skills and generosity. In the corporate world, you are not in it for yourself. Whenever you can, help a colleague, offer opportunities for growth and mentor others. This will make your life more meaningful. And, yes, in time, the money will come.

Chapter 5: Suddenly Sunday

A common yet often overlooked phenomenon in the professional world is the "Sunday Scaries." This is the anxiety and dread that creeps in as the weekend ends and the workweek looms. It affects professionals across all career stages, from entry-level employees to seasoned executives. It is that sinking feeling of unease that disrupts relaxation and joy as Sunday evening approaches.

You can also fight against the Sunday Scaries by making sure that you complete all your tasks by Friday and do not put off any of them for Monday.

To overcome the Sunday Scaries, follow these tips:

- Understand what causes the dread of Monday and prepare yourself to meet the day with serenity.
- Schedule a fun or fulfilling activity for Monday evening, after work.
- Meditate.
- Count your blessings on Sundays.

You can also fight against the Sunday Scaries by making sure that you complete all your tasks by Friday and do not put off any of them for Monday.

Most importantly, you should not allow thoughts of grumpy people you will meet at work on Monday to ruin your Sunday. Learn to stop playing conversations with them in your head and understand that their grumpiness has nothing to do with you and you should not let it affect you.

This is one of the best ways of truly enjoying your Sunday and having a good rest to prepare yourself for a new work week.

Chapter 6: Up by the Bootstraps

Resilience, self-reliance, and the power of perseverance are key in overcoming challenges and achieving success. You should take ownership of your career and adopt a mindset that embraces problem-solving and adaptability. Pulling yourself "up by the bootstraps" is a critical skill in navigating life's inevitable obstacles. Here are a few actionable steps for achieving an "up by the bootstraps" mindset:

1. Build resilience

This is the ability to stand back up after a setback and move forward. Remember that people invested in you took a chance on you, so you should not let them down. Do not feel discouraged by a mistake, but learn from it and move ahead.

2. Stay Confident

Continue to trust in yourself and your abilities. You got this role because you've proven your skills and experience and people acknowledged them. And whenever you can, instill confidence in others.

3. Be Self-Disciplined

Be careful and intentional about your work. Remember that your actions impact others, so do not give up when it gets tough. You are not alone, but part of your team. Any slacking on your part will affect others.

4. Remain Curious

Curiosity prompted all the scientific developments, exploration and continuous improvement. Human history is an example of how curiosity helps us achieve new things and become better. Using the Mood Elevator meter card, you can evaluate your level of curiosity about your job tasks and find ways to become more invested in them.

5. Be Credible

Credibility is the proof that you can do the tasks you've been given. It is closely connected with authenticity and it must be the cornerstone of how you present yourself to everyone around you.

6. Develop Multiple Skills

Termed as being good at multiple sports, this item focuses on the need to develop a wide range of skills, allowing you to fill several roles. You must not typecast yourself for a single role, as it will severely limit your ability to expand your career.

Chapter 7: Polish That Brand

Keep in mind that personal branding is a critical element for career success. Every individual has unique qualities, skills, and values that need to be refined, showcased, and continuously nurtured.

A strong, authentic personal brand is essential not only for career advancement but also for building trust, relationships, and influence in professional and personal circles.

Personal branding is defined as the way individuals present themselves to the world—how they are perceived by others in terms of their strengths, character, and reputation. A personal brand reflects a person's values, skills, and the unique attributes that set them apart.

The ultimate goal in personal branding is to become recognized as a thought leader. This is someone with authority and expertise in their field of work, a go-to source for reliable information and helpful advice.

To get there, you should ask yourself:

- What do I want to be known for?
- How can I get the word out there that I am an expert?
- How can I make a positive impact every day through my work?

Chapter 8: Be Ready for the Breaks

Another key aspect to keep in mind is being prepared to seize career-defining opportunities, called "breaks." However, it is important to understand that, unlike the generally-accepted definition of "getting a break," career breaks don't just happen.

You have to put in the time and be present, both physically and mentally, every day at every job. Even though you have self-doubts and wonder whether you are doing enough, continue to put in the time to:

- Hone your skills.
- Build relationships.
- Make a good impression from the first.
- Blend with the corporate culture and dress code.
- Be helpful and maintain a positive attitude.
- Keep your eyes on the long-term goals and remember that your career is a marathon, not a sprint.

You don't have to be perfect, just to show people that you are doing your best. Remember not just to give credit, but also to take credit for your good work. And, whenever you can, give someone else a break and help them ladder up.

Chapter 9: Look at You Now

Always remember the concept of "lifting while you climb," emphasizing the importance of helping others succeed while pursuing your own career goals. Mentorship has had a great impact on my life, particularly from Tony Chase, who instilled the importance of leaving a positive legacy through one's work.

It is extremely important to reflect on your desired impact and the value of servant leadership, prioritizing the growth and well-being of others. In turn, they will also prioritize your own best interests.

Also, make sure you understand the importance of self-awareness, as that makes the difference between healthy and arrogant confidence.

Confidence and generosity are of great significance when it comes to fostering a successful and fulfilling career. Generosity, in particular, is essential both in your personal and your professional life.

Generosity has a cyclical nature: helping others creates a positive ripple effect. However, you should not ignore the importance of self-care alongside generosity towards others. You cannot effectively give if your own needs are not met.

Practical examples of generosity in the workplace include mentoring, supporting colleagues, and actively participating in community initiatives. It is also important to maintain generosity during times of scarcity and remember the benefits of a "threefold cord" approach: combining servant leadership, confidence, and generosity for career success.

Wrapping Up

Your work is more important than you think. It is not just going to the office from 9 to 5 and putting in the hours. Every day, you have the opportunity to influence someone's life and help them find meaning and satisfaction in their work.

While writing this book, I was also counselling a woman who was undecided between staying in the same job or accepting a new role. After thoughtful advice and consideration, the woman accepted the new role.

Sometimes, in the future, she will have the opportunity to help someone else ladder up. And this is how every career can change from ordinary to extra-ordinary.

You can also become extra-ordinary in your career and life. Apply the lessons you've learned, and you will build a meaningful and successful career.



Pattie Dale Tye has a wealth of experience with thirty-plus years of P&L leadership, including public/private start-up and turnaround business models. Tye successfully led businesses through regulatory evolutions such as the Affordable Care Act, Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act, and the Telecommunications Consumer Protection Act. Using technology, new distribution channels, and innovative operational changes, she was able to reposition businesses and markets for success under new models of operating (telehealth, digital wellness, in-home monitoring).

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Plan, Act, Impact

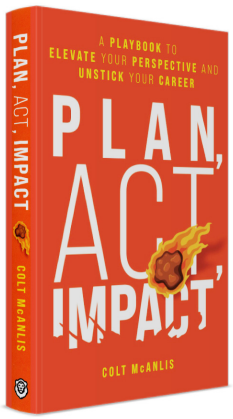
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Career &
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Plan, Act, Impact

A Playbook to Elevate Your Perspective and Unstick Your Career



by **Colt McAnlis**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

In ***Plan, Act, Impact: A Playbook to Elevate Your Perspective and Unstick Your Career,*** author Colt McAnlis, covers effective ways to achieve the goals that matter to you in your career. You will learn to let go of your cynicism and negativity towards your work. Once you can do that, plenty of opportunities open up for you. You will quickly gain traction in your career and achieve all of your professional goals. We each have a unique path to follow to achieve our goals- but you will discover your own path by reading this book.

We all need to learn how to "escape the mania of the moment", build clear objectives for our career, and recognize the positive impact that we can make. This can be a challenging journey for many, but you will gain the tools needed here. Overall, it's essential to recognize that everyone feels stuck in their career at some point or another. Once you see that, it becomes much easier to work through "unsticking" yourself.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to discover what's stopping you from making an impact.
- How to set artful, meaningful goals in your career.
- How to switch from making impactful actions to impactful ones.
- How to make a plan for your growth and success.

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Discover What's Blocking You From Making an Impact

If you feel stuck, you will want to identify exactly what's stopping you from making an impact. Joanna works hard- she's the first to arrive at work every morning and is always the last to go home at night. She is driven, focused, and very committed to her job. Yet, each year, she's still passed over for that big promotion. Why? Well, she doesn't make an impact. Companies value the impact that a person makes. You could be a hard worker like Joanna, but never leave an impression on the business. However, many people can't agree on what the word "impact" means.

Managers and CEOs often bring up the word "impact", but what does it mean to them? No one is offered a single definition of the word- which is problematic, because impact leads to promotions, raises, and growth at work.

However, you will want to think of impact as completing an important goal. In most cases, this leads to you making an impact, no matter how others tend to define the word. The goals you achieve can be made by you or by those you work for. Many people feel nervous about not understanding how their work and job performance is evaluated, so if you also feel that way, you're not alone. However, once you understand how to make an impact effectively, you'll reduce your stress and your work will come to you easier.

Low-Level Goals

Low-level goals include anything basic to do with your biology and survival. Many of us can't meet a high-level goal until we get all of the low-level ones out of the way. For instance, if you don't feel safe in your personal life, you are going to focus on that over your work.

Low-level goals have a lot to do with biology and our natural flight or fight responses to stressors. Be sure to meet your basic needs, before you try to meet other, higher and more intricate goals.

High-Level Goals

Once you have all of your low-level goals met, you can start working on the high ones. These goals build on top of the low ones. You can use the following example:

"...spending time picking wild berries will fulfill your need to alleviate hunger. However, a seven-course meal prepared by a Michelin-starred chef will too, and you'll probably enjoy it even more."

This fits in with Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The bottom levels consist of food, water, and shelter. Then comes the safety needs, with love and belonging on top of that. The next layer is esteem, which requires all previous needs be met first. Once you've accomplished those, you reach self-actualization. If you try to meet high goals without meeting the low ones, you will be met with additional stressors and challenges.

Making Impacts

When making an impact, you need to determine what goals are worth your time and what ones aren't impactful. Any behavior you make often at work is considered to be a pattern. Anti-patterns are the repeated actions you take that are hurting your goals and successes.

Anti-patterns consist of the following:

- Focusing on actions that feel right, but don't have the ability to create measurable results that matter to the company
- Actions that are impressive and create impact- but no one signed off on them, so the results aren't wanted
- Large amounts of time and effort are put in only to create large, unintended consequences, which causes the impact to get lost

If you aren't making an impact or feel that your actions are being properly recognized, you are likely stuck in one of the above anti-patterns. Once you identify which of the three is affecting you, you will be able to move on from those actions.

The Art of Goal Setting

To unstick yourself, you will want to learn how to set goals. Learning to do this accurately and effectively is much like an art- it takes time, effort, and plenty of practice. You can think of good impacts as goals that are set by you or the people around you. When you complete them, you have a stronger impact.

However, that does mean that you need to learn what is expected of you from others. That could be your coworkers, although it usually refers to management or the CEO of your business. What are the best ways for you to use your time on the clock?

You want to create measurable, wanted results that are approved of, and avoid unintended consequences. When you learn to do all that, you will set meaningful goals in your career.

Unimpactful Actions

Unimpactful actions are a result of following anti-patterns. You want to learn to switch off your anti-patterns- which can be challenging, especially if you've been following them for a very long time.

Our body's hardware all reacts differently to stimulus. For example, getting an email from your coworker is going to trigger one of three things:

- Fight
- Flight
- Or a freeze reaction

This is normal for everyone. However, how you react will determine whether or not you make an impactful or non-impactful response. You need to stop, breathe, and take the time to react appropriately. Otherwise, you will be following your old anti-patterns. If you are trying to make an impact, but have bad habits, you will never achieve your goals. You will be stuck in a cycle of anti-patterns and unimpactful actions.

It's Not You, It's Your Stress

Many people feel anxious at work. They worry that they aren't making enough of an impact and won't see any promotions or other recognition of their efforts in the future. This way of thinking can stress you out greatly and send you into a downward spiral.

We all feel stress in some form. However, you will want to learn how to manage it, so you can react appropriately. Inappropriate responses will only earn you a trip to the HR office- you want to be sure you are constantly measuring your reactions to your work surroundings. Many people feel anxiety over not understanding how their work is being evaluated by management. Of course, this can be very unsettling for many, since this has a direct effect on your career progression, your money, and even your future career path.

Learning introspection will assist you greatly in the workplace. Your actions will have a better impact, without any lasting negative repercussions. Remember, your behavior and actions at work also influence what impact you have.

Overall, if you feel that you aren't making an impact or being recognized for your actions, it's likely your stress and anxiety that is holding you back. If you're stressed about not being good enough, it almost seems like a self-fulfilling prophecy when you don't get that promotion. However, you are likely working very hard despite that. Awareness of your emotions and how you treat others will assist you in that regard.

Learn What It Takes

Next, you will need to learn what it takes to break free from the cycle of anti-patterns and unimpressive actions. You need to build a strong foundation before you can raise your impact at work. You need to start with your goals by choosing the right ones- which all need to be measurable. The more specific you can get, the better.

Establish a Solid Foundation

To establish your foundation, you need to work on your ability to build goals and avoid anti-patterns. That means, you only set meaningful and measurable goals, then work on avoiding bad habits that come from anti-patterns.

Anger could be destroying your foundation. You need to learn to look from a different perspective. You need to build tools that allow you to react appropriately to every situation you face in the corporate world. Moving forward in your career is a skill and an art. You need to perfect your current skills before you can move forward to the next level.

To do that, you need to build on your foundation skills and conduct research. You want to know:

- Who's evaluating the success of your goals
- How you can achieve your goals
- What does the board of directors, managers, or the promotion committee want to see

Impactful Actions

Impactful actions come from measurable goals. Because, if no one can measure the goal, how can you tell if it was impactful? Your bosses will not be impressed with unmeasurable results- which is why Joanna from earlier was not receiving promotions she deserved. She worked very hard, but her results weren't measurable in a way that mattered to others at the company.

Here are some examples of measurable goals that could lead to impactful actions in the workplace:

- Gain at least three new clients a month for the next four months
- Meet with mentor twice a week to develop industry skills and knowledge
- Attend one industry event per month to learn about

your industry in detail

- Pick up a mentee and meet with them for at least 30 minutes per week to teach them and improve your managerial skills

Make a Plan

You will need to know how to make a plan. This section, also is referred to as the Impactful Actions Playbook. It forms a foundation for you to understand yourself, the situations you cause that prevent you from making impacts, and ways to make stronger impacts. First, you will need to make a plan.

Your plan should include all of your end goals, then how you want to rank and source your actions towards those goals. You want every action you take to be meaningful and impactful, without causing unintended consequences.

You can think of impactful action planning as a meteor. It has impact, but also the potential to kick up a ton of debris when it strikes. Those pieces of debris can cause a lot of unintentional harm.

Impactful Actions Playbook

You will need to identify your end goals. Then, it helps you to determine what steps you need to take to get there, as well as the amount of effort you need to put in. Plus, you need to consider the ejecta (the debris from the meteor) that happens as an unintentional side effect.

For example, if you constantly want to remind everyone you're the smartest person in the room, there's going to be a ton of unintended consequences- even if you make otherwise impactful actions. You might find yourself destroying your work relationships and constantly in the HR office. Despite putting in the work, you're making the situation worse for yourself, which isn't going to lead to any promotions.

Source Potential Actions

Once you have your end goal in mind, you can source potential actions. Talk with your managers, bosses, and mentors. They will let you know what they approve of and what has worked for them in the past. You shouldn't hesitate to talk with others who you work with- they can provide you with plenty of information and offer you their own past experiences.

Many people today put in long hours and work hard, but don't get the raise or the promotion they think they deserve. This can lead to a lot of frustration, anger, and anxiety, which then becomes more anti-patterns. If you need help breaking out of these bad habits, you shouldn't hesitate to talk with higher ups.

Ask what is expected of you and how you can make more impactful goals. They will be sure to let you know and will appreciate being asked; many people enjoy sharing their insight and look for ways to improve the business from the inside.

Overall, you can source your impactful actions without worry. Doing so will show the company that you care about getting the results that they are looking for!



Colt McAnlis is an engineer, mentor, consultant, and lover of pumpkin pie. As a developer advocate for Google, his content has helped more than 4.5 million developers learn to build better, cheaper, and more performant applications. Prior to Google, Colt was a graphics and performance engineer in the games industry for Microsoft's Ensemble Studios, Blizzard Entertainment, and Petroglyph Games. He has been an adjunct professor at Southern Methodist University and takes the opportunity to lecture at UCLA every now and again.

Plan, Act, Impact: A Playbook to Elevate Your Perspective and Unstick Your Career by Colt McAnlis. © 2021 by Colt McAnlis. Summarized by permission of the publisher, Lioncrest Publishing. 246 pages, ISBN 978-1544518893. Summary copyright © 2021 by Soundview Book Summaries ®

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Red Cape Rescue

Darcy Eikenberg

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Red Cape Rescue

Save Your Career Without Leaving Your Job



by **Darcy Eikenberg**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Remember when you were a kid and you'd grab a towel and fling it around your neck? You tossed your shoulders back and stuck your chin out. You felt confident and courageous. You felt in control there in your imagined red cape—even if you only controlled the backyard. Fast-forward to your world of work, where life may feel anything but in control. What if you could don your red cape, layering new strengths and confidence? Perhaps you've hit a speedbump in your once reasonably fine career. That shift might have originated from the outside, sparked by an economic crash, illness, or government uncertainty. Or your career chaos might have been ignited by changes only visible to your company or profession, such as a technology breakthrough, outsourced talent, a merger, or a leadership shake-up.

You can save your career and succeed on your own terms at work. Darcy Eikenberg, in ***Red Cape Rescue***, shows how to do this without the drastic interventions of finding a new job, starting a business, bowing to an early and unwanted retirement, or, worse, compromising your health and happiness.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to shift your mindset and build your confidence.
- What you control and what you don't.
- Fresh strategies for powerful conversations.
- To battle the blocks, protect your time, and move your career forward.

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Reset How You Think

Right now, you might feel overwhelmed, confused, or even angry about what's happening at work. In this first step of our adventure, you'll unlock the secret to taking charge once more.

Know Your Core Powers

Here is the complete list of everything in the world you control: Everything you think. Everything you say. Everything you do. That's it. Our internal desires for control are merely a well-trained response—an attempt to stay safe. But "safe" isn't a route to more meaning, impact, or happiness. It's only a route to more of the same. The good news is that once you see what you control—and what you don't—you'll create a stronger sense of power, safety, self-worth, and freedom. Focus only on the things you think, say, and do. When you do, you'll reclaim your power and start recreating your life at work.

Conquer the Battle of the Brain

When your world goes haywire, you can use your newfound power to control what you think, learning to conquer the battle of the brain. Your brain isn't always on your side. The amygdala, which in the old days would trigger us when we'd hear a tiger roar, now triggers us when we hear our manager roar. The well-meaning amygdala works like an alarm to the body, alerting the hypothalamus, which signals the adrenal glands. Their job is to shoot you a dose of adrenaline, forcing your heart to race and blood to pump. We might freeze and hide. Alternatively, we sweat, feel the flush in our face, and get defensive, we're in fight mode. When you separate the fearful, judging thoughts from the real you, you regain energy and confidence, and you take back control of your biggest assets: your brain.

Unveil Your Values

Your values are the soundtrack playing behind each scene in the movie of your life. Clarifying your values might take some work and make you uncomfortable. But the only way to operate in sync with your values is to first know what the heck they are. Not what you think they should be. Not what your parents valued. Not what your spouse, boss, or fave celebrity values, either. But what they are, right now, with you just as you are. You'll feel clearer and more confident. You'll make decisions faster and grow more secure about saying yes or no. Then you'll generate the kind of confidence that helps you soar.

Imagine Positive Intent

You know that moment. A colleague says or does something that pushes your button. The one that makes your face flush hot, your fists clench, your jaw tighten. Maybe they say that thing in an email. You read it, mutter a few choice words to yourself, and start to hammer out a heated response. Your keyboard quietly cries out in pain as you power through and hit send. Later, you discover that the sender meant something entirely different from what you read into it. Your flushed face is now covered in egg. Prevent this embarrassment. Imagine positive intent.

Psychologist David D. Burns describes it this way. Imagine a clear glass of water. Then imagine squeezing a drop of black ink into the glass. Soon, the entire glass turns dark. That's how negative thinking colors our perspective about ourselves and others. But here's the truth: there's still a lot more water in that glass than ink. See the water, not the ink.

Listen to the Whispers

Jan worked in a corporate sales role when she started to hear her whispers, and she didn't trust them. Her whispers were pulling her toward design—a field that seemed miles away from what she was doing in sales. She developed a plan to tune in to those messages from her future self. Jan uncovered that her whispers were pointing her toward working with clients long-term. Jan chose to identify others in similar roles, scheduling conversations, and researching different roles in her company. Jan's whispers grew louder when she acted. Her actions not only clarified who she wanted to be, but also how she wanted to be in her life at work.

Revise What You Say

Don't be fooled by our soundbite world. Words still matter—the ones we think and the ones we say out loud. Let's tell a new tale about the hero you're becoming—and the one you already are.

Rewrite Your Story

How do you get from where you are now to the new story that works for you, even if it's not yet happily ever after? To start, shine a light on your existing story. What are you telling yourself and others about your current situation? Write it down or record it. Play it back and listen for two things: a seemingly powerful outside force and any negative emotions or commentary.

Now, let's write a new story, giving yourself permission to

feel clear, confident, courageous. You have total power over all you control (what you think, say, and do). Don't censor or judge your story. You're working with what you've got, and it's likely more than you realize.

Ask for What You Need

When making the case for a promotion, Gretchen recognized that a change in her role would create stress for her boss and might generate tension on her team. She proposed a plan for how her team would operate should her promotion be granted. "I listed duties that I could easily transition to the team members I had trained," she said. "I outlined how my promotion would be an opportunity for others to grow, and how it wouldn't add work to my boss's day." After continuing the conversation and anticipating how her advancement would personally affect others, Gretchen was soon promoted to vice president. Satisfying, meaningful careers are all about asking.

Watch Your Language

When you recall how your brain triggers your thoughts, you can change your thoughts. And when you change your thoughts, you can change your words. Emotion puts us in motion. When we speak positive words about ourselves (or to and about others), we move forward. When our dialogue is drowning in the negative, those words hold us back, keeping us right where we are or, even worse, digging a hole so deep that climbing out is hard. Words create worlds, and what you say matters. Don't wait for the right words to appear like magic. Create the right ones now to help your ideal situations appear.

Affirm the Squirm

A Red Cape Rescue calls you to redefine success—in your job, in your company, in your profession—on your own terms. For most of us, that's just plain uncomfortable. Discomfort is the only path to growth. There is no substitute. Take Alison Levine. A world-class mountaineer, she's not only climbed the highest peak on all seven continents but also skied to the North and South Poles. That's despite three heart surgeries and Raynaud's disease, which impacts the circulation in her hands and feet, leaving her at extreme risk for frostbite. For this adventurer, discomfort—physical and mental—goes with the territory. Make uncomfortable your new comfortable.

Accelerate Appreciation

When you're under tremendous stress ignited by changes at work, giving gratitude a little room can be a struggle. You smell fakery, as though you're desperately trying to convince yourself that "I'm happy and whole" when you feel like anything but. Gratitude is an emotion, a feeling that emerges in positive experiences, prayers, moments of quiet thanks. Appreciation is the vocal expression of that emotion. It's the emotional punch that makes the gratitude become real, because you've expressed it in a genuine and useful way. When you accelerate appreciation, you turn your view from inward to outward. As you do, you'll start to notice more things to be thankful for.

Reinvent What You Do

Amid the forest of career change, fear, anxiety, and worry inevitably pop out from behind the trees, challenging you to turn back. Let's anticipate their presence and learn a countermove that'll fend them off every time.

Forge a Fear Strategy

When a handful of big players in her industry started purchasing smaller companies like hers, Anaya worried her company would be next. Consolidation could mean her upper-level job would be eliminated. At first, the fear froze her, keeping her up at night. I asked her, "If you believe that fear to be true, then what can you do about it? How can you take control?" The answers to those questions always lead to a plan. Anaya focused on people. When the fear kicked up, it signaled her to reach out to someone. Her outreach began as a basic "hello" email or call to an old friend. Soon, she was scheduling conversations with company leaders to raise her profile, communicate her contribution, and assess how others understood her value. Later, she started reaching out to people outside her company to build her network. That plan was powerful, helping Anaya take control of what she could do, letting go of the fears of what she would never control.

Counteract Chaos

We humans become exceptionally creative, changing our words and ways, sometimes in an instant. Kate Braestrup knows this to be true. A law enforcement chaplain in the state of Maine, she knocks on doors to deliver the terrible news of an unexpected death. In holding hundreds of people through that first wave of immense grief, she discovered something remarkable. The initial, devastating reaction never lasts more than half an hour. Certainly, it returns as people adjust to their loss, but, Braestrup observes, even

in the first sixty minutes, people begin creating next steps. They ask, "Where is the body?" "When can we have a funeral?" "What do we do next?" Within an hour, she notes, survivors begin to create their new lives. Choose creative action instead of suffering in chaos. It's the only way to the new beginning that you want.

Drop Some Balls

Taking on more to the degree that it wears you down or distracts you from what's most important is not a success strategy. It's a recipe for failure. You push your needs into tiny corners of time in between meetings, conference calls, and commutes. Your sleeping habits, healthy eating, or regular walks outdoors can shift to the back burner fast. You end up sacrificing you. Let's not do that. There's a success strategy in doing less.

Magnify Momentum

If you've ever tried to grow a tomato, you know you can't just plant it and leave it alone. The eventual tomato is heavier than its branches will hold. You need a stake or cage to give the new growth more security, something to hang onto during its precarious journey upward. You need to provide structure that will support what the plant's growing into, not what it was at the start. It's the same with me and you. For our momentum to grow properly, we need a success structure to support us.

Pursue Progress

TA-DAs are typically the sole province of Olympians, circus folk, and toddlers proudly waddling, arms up, toward their parents. Right now, I bet you can even hear the two chords that often accompany the move: TA-DA! Although there's no precise record, ta-da seems to have originated in the early 1900s, when an orchestra leader encouraged his musicians to end with a flourish—the kind of long and short notes that let you know the king is about to appear. He said, "Let's hear a ta-da," and the rest is history. I invite you to do the same.

Throw your shoulders back, shake out your red cape, and raise those hands in the air. You've more than earned the applause. Don't pretend you're a hero. You are one, red cape and all. In fact, you're the hero you've been waiting for.



Darcy Eikenberg is on a mission to help us change our lives at work without having to change everything in our lives, especially during times of great change (and face it—when AREN'T we managing change?). She's coached leaders at companies such as Aon, The Coca-Cola Company, State Farm, and Deloitte, and offers encouraging ways to change work for the better, for good. Before launching leadership career coaching firm RedCapeRevolution.com, Darcy was a principal at human resources consulting firm Hewitt Associates (now part of Alight Solutions), where she served on both the Southeast and the North American Communication Consulting Leadership teams.

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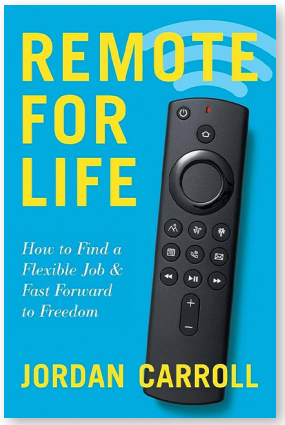
Remote for Life

Jordan Carroll

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Remote for Life

How to Find a Flexible Job and Fast Forward to Freedom



by **Jordan Carroll**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

We all have a vague idea of the ideal life of freedom we want to create for ourselves. At the same time, most of us are also tied to a job that restricts us from evening thinking about it. But what if you could free yourself from the geographic and financial barriers that restrict you from achieving your ideal life while consistently climbing your career ladder?

The book ***Remote for Life: How to Find a Flexible Job and Fast Forward to Freedom,*** answers this very question by helping you grab your own metaphorical "remote control." It unravels the realities of remote work, discusses the importance of creating your own vision, and helps you craft the mindset of succeeding at remote work.

Having lived (and currently living) the digital life himself, Jordan Carroll empowers readers to gain more freedom and live the life they've always imagined. From putting your priorities at the forefront to networking smartly – he equips you with the tools and strategies you need to land your dream remote job.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- About the benefits and challenges of a remote job.
- How to determine the type of remote job you want.
- How to search, find, and get hired by a remote company.
- How to live and work abroad.

Introduction

The remote revolution is officially here, which creates both challenges and opportunities for you, depending on how you look at it. The opportunity? More companies than ever are offering remote positions. The challenge? More people than ever want to work remotely, creating absurd levels of competition for even basic work-from-home jobs.

On your journey to seeking a remote job, you might have faced your own set of challenges. But the reality is, being good at your job and being good at the job search are two different skill sets. You may be good at your job but are you just as good at searching for your next work adventure?

My goal is to help you create a system for searching, finding, and getting hired by remote companies as well as to identify the types of remote companies that will allow you to live your ideal lifestyle.

Mute the Noise: Debunking Remote Work Misconceptions

The remote revolution is still met with skepticism and doubt by many but it's clearly here to stay. The reality is, companies who are shrugging off remote work will be the ones struggling to retain talent. The best employees will demand flexibility and they'll go wherever they feel valued and trusted.

With remote work, businesses can draw from a much wider pool of talent, and their options are no longer limited to those living within commuting distance. Companies have different remote work policies based on factors like tax laws, regulations, location of incorporation, leadership experience, and more. The different types of remote work models include:

- All Remote Model where everyone works remotely, 100% of the time.
- Remote First Model where companies encourage remote work even if they have offices.
- Remote Okay/Friendly Model where companies offer remote work as a choice but don't necessarily have the infrastructure to promote a great remote work culture.
- Hybrid-Remote Model which is a combination of in-office and remote work.

Remote work is available for all kinds of people across a wide array of industries. This includes being a remote employee, freelancer, business owner, and digital nomad.

As long as you're willing to put in the work, a legitimate well-paying remote job is a possibility for you. Remember, remote work isn't necessarily a solution but a tool to help you create the life you want.

Use the Channel Guide: Know Your Options

Remote work gives you the opportunity to design the lifestyle you desire. It throws off the shackles of geographic locations and allows you to either work from the comfort of your home or from anywhere in the world. It can also help you save time and money, focus on your health, and spend more time with your family or yourself.

It is important to remember, however, that some remote jobs do have geographical restrictions. While remote work offers a plethora of perks, you need an ultra-strong self-discipline muscle to make this lifestyle work for you.

To design a solid remote life, it's important to ask yourself, "What are my motivations for wanting to work remotely?" Once you know what your ideal life looks like, visualize your ideal company. The goal here is to make your life goals, ambitions, and priorities come first before work.

Adjust Your Settings: Preparing for Remote Success

There is a learning curve to both remote work and the job search itself. You can offset this curve by making adjustments. By using your regular remote, you can improve the viewing experience by adjusting the sound setup, language, and picture resolution. Likewise, by changing the settings of your "metaphorical remote" – your mindset, your remote work setup, and your work strategies – you can become a more appealing candidate and increase your odds of success in your job search.

Build the right mindset by letting go of faulty entitlement and unrealistic expectations. Learn how to respond to discouragements and take full responsibility for your job search. Gain more confidence by gathering courage and commitment, increasing your capacity, and internalizing confident behavior.

Finally, construct a productive work environment to ensure you get your work don't once you're in your chair. Your remote setup during a job search should include

essentials like a crisp audio setup, clear video quality, a dedicated workspace, an ergonomic desk and chair, and reliable connectivity.

Rewind: Use Your Past Skills and Experience to Your Advantage

The right remote job matches your skills and the vision of your ideal lifestyle. The problem is, there might be a gap between your current skills and your vision. Any job search is intimidating, and a remote position may even feel impossible. However, there's always a way to make the transition. If you know how to hit rewind, you can find experiences and skills from your past that can be transferred to a remote job. You can even develop new skills if necessary.

Start with reframing your mind. Know that reaching your vision isn't linear for everyone. Gather experiences instead of waiting around for the perfect opportunity. Build a path of stepping stones. When changing jobs there are a number of levers at play that will impact the difficulty of the transition. These include the job role, how far a company supports remote work, work culture, industry, and company size. Be thoughtful of how many of these levers you can pull when hunting for your next job.

Remember, skills are the currency you use in the remote job marketplace. While hard skills such as programming or designing are important, it is equally important to focus on soft skills. Work on your digital proficiency, emotional intelligence, self-motivation and autonomy, written communication, teamwork and collaboration, time and energy management, organization, and problem-solving skills. Finally, continue to review and upgrade your skills to get better every single day.

Crank the Volume: How to Turn Up Your Personal Brand

Let's define personal brand using a quick formula: Your Self-Image + Other's Perception x Behavior = Personal Brand.

Your self-image is how you see yourself, who you think you are, and who you want to be. Your self-image is intuitive and comes from self-awareness. Other's perception is how other people see you. If you have self-awareness, you already have some idea of how others see you. In case you don't know what they think, simply ask.

People will judge you based on what you do, not what you say, which is why your behavior is the multiplier in the personal brand equation. Remember, how you act online should be akin to how you act in person. The closer you align the two, the more your values and personality will shine through. This doesn't mean oversharing, but it means understanding that potential employers can see a record of your activity – posts, comments, and even likes.

Be authentic and design your personal image to ensure you are appealing to potential employers. Showcase your talent and value. Keep cultivating your self-image, others' perception, and your behavior to reflect who you really want to be.

Use video content, a personal website, blogs, social media posts, LinkedIn, and public speaking to make your uniqueness shine in the eyes of the recruiter.

Explore the Menu: Know How to Find Legit Remote Jobs

There are several ways to find the right remote job opportunities in a creative yet efficient way. When starting your job search, take the focus away from job boards and shift it to companies to minimize the chances of taking the wrong job.

Make a list of the companies you want to target based on the type of job you're qualified for and the geographical freedom you want. If you do feel the need for using job boards, use them carefully. The goal here is to aim for quality rather than quantity. Always remember your priorities. These would include the industry, job role, the freedom to travel, money, the variety you need in your experience, and the company culture. Once you get your priorities right, filter your search based on them.

Learn to smell a scam when you see one. Some of the most common signs of a scam include "work from home" highlighted as the main part of the title, something that sounds too good to be true, a lack of information, and opportunities that pop out from vague posts in an internet group or forum.

On-Demand: Networking is the Shortcut to What You Want

Networking is your solution to any challenge. Need more clients? Network better. Looking for a friend or a significant other? Network better. Want more job opportunities? Network better. Your ability to interact with others and navi-

gate social dynamics with emotional intelligence is often the best indicator of life success, happiness, and fulfillment.

The goal of networking is to identify and build relationships with the kind of people who either do what you do or hire people who do what you do. Networking helps show decision-makers you're competent, creative, and persistent. It helps you position yourself as the only option in the company's mind.

The easiest formula for networking success is – (Intention + Value) x Consistency = Results. Having pure intention sets the tone. Your value determines whether others see you as an asset or not. Consistency becomes the multiplier for your progress and the most important way to compound your network's growth. Use texts, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Email to constantly work on and succeed at your networking skills.

Change the Channel: Optionality Through Freelance Work

For many people wanting to join the remote workforce without necessarily quitting their jobs, freelancing can be a great bridge. The goal here is to gather enough skills, experience, and network before quitting the traditional job. Freelancers can also work on a variety of different and interesting projects instead of being locked into an organization.

When looking for freelance gigs, it's important to learn or build on a specific skill you have. Turn this skill into a service, gather your work samples or portfolio, optimize your profile, send custom proposals, messages, or cover letters to potential clients, and stay active in the community you serve.

Ideally, you can reach a point as a freelancer where you set up your profiles or a website and clients come to you. Until then, be ready to put in the legwork to get your first gigs.

Press Enter: The Application Process That Puts You in the Game

Knowing what not to do is important when sending out applications. Be realistic when evaluating your candidacy for a job without over-qualifying or under-qualifying yourself.

Focus on quality over quantity by finding jobs based on your priorities and customizing your application for each shortlisted position. Don't overemphasize remote work because it can make employers think remote work is the only reason you want to join them.

Perform comprehensive research before knocking at a company's door. Always send customized cover letters and maintain a decent online persona. Build a solid and customizable "application package" of your resume, cover letter, video application, and value assets. Once you submit your application online, the ideal situation would be to send all these materials directly by email to the hiring manager as well to let them know you've applied.

Hit Info: Preparing for Interviews

When preparing for the interview, review the job listing and description, do your research on the company and the interviewer, and review your application package. This will quip you with knowledge and confidence when that interview call finally arrives.

Create powerful stories by combining their exact words and your unique metrics and experiences to list your achievements that align with the company's requirements. Finally, never hesitate to follow up and remind the hiring manager of your presence if you don't receive a response within a week.

Search and Select: Living and Working Abroad

The different ways to work remotely abroad include being:

- Digital Tourists who can't take time off work, so they combine both vacation and work.
- Digital Backpackers who move location frequently (once in every one to three weeks), travel on a budget and require great flexibility in their work schedule.
- Digital Slowmads who want to experience the world instead of just seeing it and choose to stay in a single location for one to six months.
- Digital Expats who live for long-term in another country, becoming fully immersed in the local culture and community. More and more countries today are offering digital nomad visas to attract remote workers.

Regardless of the way you live and work abroad, always remember to deploy the hard work and discipline to achieve the lifestyle you want.

Conclusion

If you know how to handle your own "remote control" the benefits of this work lifestyle are endless.

With remote work, you save a ton of time that would otherwise get wasted in commuting to and from work. It also helps improve health because, with more time, you can make fitness and nutrition a priority. Those working in remote jobs also get the opportunity to spend quality time with their family every day instead of just on weekends.

With all its perks, remote work comes with its own challenges. When designing your life, it's important to be realistic about the challenges you'll face. Remote work demands self-discipline and if you don't know how to build your discipline muscle, remote work will be miserable for you.

Now that you know which buttons to press to land a remote job, it's time to get kickstart your journey. Start putting in the work today to make your dreams a reality tomorrow.



Jordan Carroll, the Remote Job Coach, creates content, courses, and coaching programs to help job seekers land legitimate remote jobs for more freedom and flexibility in their lives. He also helps remote-first companies secure targeted traffic to their opportunities, hire top-tier remote professionals, and synonymize their culture with the evolving remote work industry. Jordan has worked remotely since 2013 in a variety of industries and companies, from small and midsize startups to a Fortune 50 firm. Thousands of high-performing remote job seekers throughout the world have used Jordan's methodologies to find success in their remote job searches.

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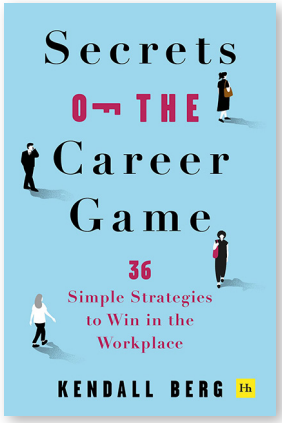
Secrets of the Career Game

Kendall Berg

Executive Book Summaries®

Secrets of the Career Game

36 Simple Strategies to Win in the Workplace



by **Kendall Berg**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

What if I told you to sit down and play a game— say it looks a bit like chess, but the board and pieces are subtly different. You're sure you've never played this game, but you can tell it's competitive, so when I refuse to tell you the rules and then ask you to stake your livelihood and that of your family on the outcome, how would you respond?

There's one crucial rule that's common to both chess and the career game: Even when you start out as a pawn, it's possible to become the queen. To do that, you must learn how to identify the tasks that will add maximum value to your career, how to understand the vernacular of leadership, and how to navigate interpersonal conflict successfully.

In ***Secrets of the Career Game: 36 Simple Strategies to Win in the Workplace***, Kendall Berg gives people the tools to understand that while the work that they do is important, everything else they are not doing is just as important. It is learning the right way to position themselves for opportunities, relationships, and promotions. Most importantly, it is to stop gambling, learn the rules of the game, and start playing to win.

IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY:

- Learn to propel your career quickly.
- Build advocates and great relationships.
- Understand and develop your skills.
- Expand your network.

CHAPTER 1: What is the Game?

People need to move away from thinking of themselves in terms of the basic workplace functions—as order-takers, widget-producers, and output-machines—and understand that workers are individuals who add unique value to the system and ultimately meet the clients' needs.

Secret #1: You are an entrepreneur, and your career is your business

Run your career like a business. When you start to see yourself as a product of your business, you can begin to deliver a stronger and more valuable impact to your company, rather than becoming an order-taker without clear prioritization or direction.

Secret #2: Relationships matter more than the work

Develop your work relationships. People need to make the conscious effort to learn about and understand the others they'll be working with, on both a professional and personal level. When they do, the chances are they'll get along much better in both capacities and build advocates rather than adversaries.

Secret #3: Communication is key

Upskill your communication. Whether they're an introvert or an extrovert, neurotypical or neurodivergent, outgoing or reserved, people can learn to communicate well.

Secret #4: No one is responsible for your career but you

Accept responsibility for your career. An individual in a job that aligns with their skills, passions, and interests will always be more successful than someone who ends up at odds with the role or the company culture.

CHAPTER 2: Promotable and Non-Promotable Tasks

Start by dividing work into the following broad categories:

1. Work that is core to the maintenance of the position; refer to this as "business as usual" (or BAU) work.
2. Work that drives forward the goals of the organization and generally will include collaboration across various groups; refer to this as high-impact or high-visibility work
3. Work that makes people more marketable or valuable as an individual through the development of their personal skills or improves culture and engagement across their organization; refer to this as self-development or engagement work

Secret #5: You must have and maintain healthy boundaries

Use boundaries to prioritize, bundle, and rebrand. The trick to progressing while holding strict boundaries is that people have to deliver within those boundaries. There's a three-step process to achieving this: prioritize, bundle, and rebrand.

Secret #6: Your boss does not know what you are working on

Don't keep your successes secret from your boss. Ensure that the right communication strategy is in place to inform, escalate, and advocate.

Secret #7: How you talk about your work matters

Understand the three types of work. Assuming people have identified the BAU work in their job, what do they focus on next? The two other types of work: high impact/high visibility and self-development/engagement.

CHAPTER 3: Your Most Marketable Skills

People need to stop worrying about their weaknesses and instead focus on the ways they can bolster their own strengths. This will allow workers to have a greater impact on their overall company and thus advocate for more progression.

Secret #8: If you do not have an impact, you will not see progression

Maximize your impact above all else. It is so much more important to deliver impact than simply to do a job. People might meet more resistance to new ideas, but even within that resistance there is an opportunity to utilize their skills to drive impact, measure that impact, and then share that impact to their leadership.

Secret #9: An unneeded skill is unvaluable

Take your strengths where they are most needed. Knowing oneself allows them to identify their strengths, invest in them heavily, and align themselves to roles and companies that will best allow them to shine.

Learn to brag. You are not bragging, you are informing. You must inform your boss of the work you complete and the effort it takes when they are not present.

CHAPTER 4: Brand Building

The 11-List

To create your 11-List, write out the following:

- Five things you want to be known for at work.
- Five things you don't want to be known for at work.
- One mission statement.

Secret #10: What people think of you at work is directly in your control

Keep your brand message on the tip of your tongue. When you have, and know, your personal brand, you should describe your work consistently and frequently within the bounds of that brand.

Secret #11: Your brand will enter the room long before you do and leave long after you are gone

Let your brand do the heavy lifting for you. Your goal is that, when people have new opportunities in their teams or are discussing possible promotions, one person in the room will mention your personal brand positively and everyone else will nod in agreement. Even without you present to describe yourself or to talk about all the good work you've done, you want your personal brand in attendance and corroborated by the other leaders.

CHAPTER 5: Competencies and Performance Reviews

You need to understand your employer's requirements, often referred to as competencies, as well as the expectations surrounding them, to maximize your chances of progressing in your job.

Secret #12: People prefer to work with people that they like

Make sure you know what your boss thinks about your competencies.Realize that once you understand the importance of communication in working effectively, you control how you interact with others and how you are perceived, rather than letting the circumstances around you influence your career.

Secret #13: A desire for a promotion without a plan will land you exactly where you are now 12 months in the future

Learn to brag. You are not bragging, you are informing. You must inform your boss of the work you complete and the effort it takes when they are not present. It needs to include efforts taken to improve the overall company, deliver on major initiatives, and innovate new ideas.

Secret #14: Work that your boss doesn't know about doesn't matter

Cover your… assets. Even resolved issues generally make their way up the management chain. It is much better for your reputation if you are the one who informs your boss.

Secret #15: Most conversations about your career will take place without you in the room

Set yourself up for cross-calibration success. A cross-calibration is essentially where leaders bring the reviews of their teams into a room to compare against the reviews of the other teams in the organization. Then they calibrate scores across seniority levels and comparable job types. It is important to understand how these reviews work, both to apply the previous advice effectively and to set yourself up for success in these conversations.

CHAPTER 6: The 9-Box

People often get confused regarding the difference between their performance and their potential. Companies invest a lot of time and effort into understanding the various performance metrics and comparisons across their organization. However, potential is a bit more subjective. When leaders evaluate an individual's potential, it is essentially an assessment of how rapidly and how high an individual will progress.

Secret #16: Your potential, not your performance, is what gets you into senior leadership

Boost the soft skills that will show your potential. It is much harder for managers to teach soft skills than it is to teach technical skills. You will do your team a disservice if you hire someone expecting to teach them soft skills when you don't know how.

CHAPTER 7: Skill Maturity with Seniority

When you progress in your career, you will be expected to enhance and strengthen various skills in alignment with your newfound seniority. The problem is that many people struggle to develop skills without clear instruction and guidance, ultimately leading to a plateau in their growth.

Secret #17: Building your leadership skills allows for not only your success but the success of your team

Develop the skills needed not only for the level you're working at, but for the levels you aspire to

This skill development takes part in four stages:

1. technical acumen,
2. social skills,
3. managerial capabilities,
4. strategic vision.

CHAPTER 8: The Network

Your progression will often rely on leaders from within your area knowing who you are, what you're good at, and what you are capable of. It is not enough to depend on your manager to advocate on your behalf. In short, you're going to need to build yourself a network.

Secret #18: Your network must extend beyond your own team

Grow your network organically. The reality is that hiring managers have a higher chance of success when bringing in someone who they know, value, and trust, rather than taking a risk on someone based solely on their resume and interview skills.

Secret #19: Without a network you will fail

Grow your network intentionally. First you need to understand the most powerful people in your organization and create an influencer list of them who would be important to your network. Then score them in accordance with the following:

- Relationship
- Seniority
- Risk
- Power
- Exposure
- Fear
- Validation
- Future

Once you have everyone added and scored, create a total for each person and then rank them.

Secret #20: People who help you will think of you more fondly than people you help

Allow the people in your network to help you first. Each person across your company, especially those with influence and power, will have their own unique brand and skillset. The best thing that you can do for your current and future development is hone in on the skills of those individuals by identifying their personal brand, and then leverage that knowledge as the platform for building your original relationship while scaling your abilities.

CHAPTER 9: Interpersonal Conflict and How to Disagree

"You can't be honest at work. People who provide feedback or try to make things better, end up on a 'list' and get fired." This is a widespread belief. The reality is that this is a lie. People hide behind the 'fact' that they were right rather than take ownership for their tone, language, and communication skills in a way that sets them up for success in the long term.

Secret #21: How you communicate your disagreement is more important than your opinion

Your leadership does not always want the most direct solution. Politics gets more present and more difficult to navigate at more senior levels of leadership. This means that sometimes when solving or addressing a problem, leadership is also navigating politics at a senior level that you are not privy to.

Your leadership may have context that you do not have visibility into. Most people are intrinsically self-absorbed

Manage the patterns, not the person.
As a manager, you need to be able to identify patterns in behavior rather than merely symptoms.

and focused on their own priorities. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, but in the workplace environment it is easy to get tunnel vision, where your priorities eclipse those of the larger company.

You are not effectively bringing people along on the mental journey you have experienced. Some people are natural problem-solvers. Some people are highly analytical. Unfortunately for these individuals, what can seem so obvious to them given their experience, knowledge, and acumen is not obvious to their counterparts and leadership. Learn the type of person you're disagreeing with: The King or The Specialist.

Secret #22: Catering your communication to the individual will prevent conflict and disagreements before they arise

Practice nemawashi. The Japanese have a word that applies here: nemawashi. This literally translates as 'turning the roots' but is a colloquialism for 'decisions happen in the hallways.' It is the informal business process of layering the foundation for a proposed change or project by talking to the people concerned and gathering support informally before making a formal proposal.

Secret #23: You are not always going to get your way

Accept that some of your best ideas will be rejected. People all think that they have the best ideas and that they know what is best for their team and organization, but sometimes leadership takes things in a different direction.

CHAPTER 10: Managing Vs Leading

The fastest way to propel your career forward is to enter into, and excel at, management. The goal here is to equip you with the skills that you need in order to step into a management role successfully and with a high level of business acumen regardless of what your company provides to prepare you.

Secret #24: Managing and leading are not the same

Understand the three pillars of effective management:

1. Being able to set clear expectations for your team members.
2. Regular check-ins for development and project completion.
3. A keen understanding of the learning styles and goals of your individual team members.

Secret #25: Success starts at assignment, not at completion

Conduct management ceremonies. It is important to your success as a manager and to your team's success to have good ceremonies and meetings in place that allow updates to happen organically.

Secret #26: A successful employee begets a successful leader

Build an advocacy plan for your team. Start by mapping out your team's functional organizational hierarchy—this will describe the high-level work and scope that each team member is responsible for as well as the reporting structure of within the team. Then align components of your strategy or 'stretch opportunities' to each individual. Lastly, map the specific projects to that person.

Secret #27: Negative patterns are more problematic than negative people

Manage the patterns, not the person. As a manager you need to be able to identify patterns in behavior rather than merely symptoms. These patterns of behavior require feedback and management. You can tie multiple issues and areas of improvement to one pattern and then treat the actual disease.

Secret #28: You can't compensate for your team

Build your team up with growth in mind. There are three key factors to keep in mind when you create, establish, or grow your team:

1. Don't be afraid to manage out underperformers.
2. When hiring new people, focus on great attitudes, work ethic, and culture fits first with technical skills second.
3. Delegate.

Secret #29: Strategy is essential

Build yourself a strategy. In order to build a strategy and a vision you really only need to do three things:

1. Understand the goals and objectives of your organization and how your team fits into that larger picture.
2. Learn 'the rule of threes.'
3. Think through how your team would function in the future if you had unlimited money and resources.

CHAPTER 11: Managing Toxic Workplaces, Mental Load, and Your Boss

This concept of mental load is actually a better indicator of burnout than the number of hours worked or results on an employee engagement survey.

Secret #30: Managing your mental load should take priority over managing your workload

Choose your tactics for reducing mental load.

1. Lists
2. Time/day blocking
3. Prioritization/Deprioritization
4. Delegation
5. Create a strategy
6. Do not share roadmaps that are too long-term

Secret #31: A toxic workplace isn't good for anyone

1. Leverage your workplace support networks
2. Human Resources
3. Benefits
4. Unions
5. Peer Networks

Secret #32: It takes time to recover from a toxic workplace

Between jobs, give yourself time to rebuild your confidence in yourself and in your skills.Focus particularly on the skills of adding value and contributing to solutions. Rediscover your unique skills, brand, and abilities so that you can start to find yourself and your confidence again. Build your brand statement and begin weaving it into conversations. Decide what you want for yourself and your career now that you are free from the expectations of your last job.

CHAPTER 12: Do You Even Want a Corner Office?

While every skill a CEO possesses can be learned, some people will be more naturally inclined to learn them, while most will not want to dedicate the time and effort it takes.

Secret #33: Most people will never be executives

If you want to be an executive, prepare to leave your comfort zone behind. There are five non-negotiable skills and attributes you need to possess:

1. Public speaking
2. Moral character
3. Strategy
4. The ability to navigate interpersonal conflict
5. Unwavering confidence

Secret #34: The right path for your career is a natural alignment to your skills and interests

Avoid the 'accidental career' trap. Understand your own skills and differentiation in the job market and then use that information to build a personal brand. Once you know who you are, you can network and advocate yourself into better, more senior positions that best suit your skills.

CHAPTER 13: Ghost Cultures and the Leaders You Hire

The reality is that the culture most employees experience is the subculture that exists only within their direct team and supervisor. The imagined culture of the overall enterprise might exist at the highest levels of leadership, but seldom trickles down to the average employee.

Secret #35: Only the culture of your direct manager matters

Get to the truth of your employer company's culture. This is important for two reasons. First, when you are seeking out new employment opportunities or navigating internal

corporate change, the way that your direct manager thinks about career progression, team member development, and overall work-life balance is the most important thing you should consider when evaluating the right fit.

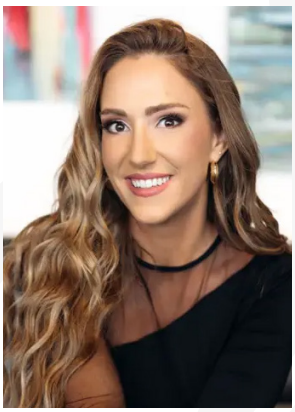
The second reason that your company's true culture is more important than its cultural tagline: As a manager or leader you have the ability and responsibility to ensure your team has a great subculture.

Secret #36: The leaders you hire determine your company culture

Recruit great leaders. People will all have different ways of prioritizing work, communicating, and even handling conflict, but culture requires core values alignment in order to be maintained.

CHAPTER 14: Conclusion

Finding your career success does not have to be a game of guesses. Instead, you can structure your time and efforts strategically to make the most impact in the fewest number of moves. This will allow you to progress your career quickly, while building advocates and great relationships along the way. Understand your unique skills, build your network, prepare for competency evaluations, develop your skills with each jump in seniority, become a great manager, and establish a great culture that helps you reach new heights in your personal career journey.



As the founder of That Career Coach, Kendall Berg helps her clients and followers understand how to find progression, recognition, and support in their careers. She regularly supports her more than 500K followers across Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube with her take on playing the career game. Prior to starting her company, Kendall worked with and for some of the largest companies in the world including Capital One, JP Morgan Chase, Samsung, and AT&T.

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Shtick to Business

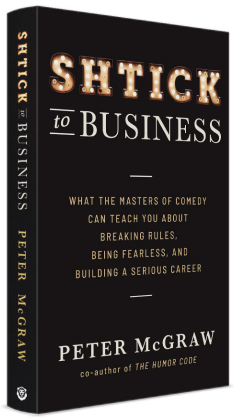
Peter McGraw

Career & Self-Development

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Shtick to Business

What the Masters of Comedy Can Teach You about Breaking Rules, Being Fearless, and Building a Serious Career



by **Peter McGraw**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Can the world of comedy teach us something about becoming successful in business? If you ask behavioral scientist and comedy decoder Dr. Peter McGraw, the answer is a resounding 'yes.'

McGraw is a business school professor, professional speaker, and the founder of the Humor Research Lab (also known as 'HuRL'). He's also the author of ***Shtick to Business,*** an in-depth guide to what comedy can teach us about entrepreneurship, leadership, and success. McGraw draws on cutting-edge research and his own successes and failures in comedy to reveal surprising lessons that can transform your approach to business and life.

If you're looking to improve your innovation abilities, outsmart competitors and get to the goal line first, make smarter decisions in your everyday life, and market your skills and products more effective, you'll find insights to help you get there in ***Shtick to Business.***

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- What massively successful comedians understand about career management.
- Why Dave Chappelle and Joan Rivers are a blueprint for brand building.
- What comedians and humor can teach you about leadership and teamwork.
- How the rituals of successful comics make them wealthy beyond their wildest dreams.

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Meghan P. Kozak, Editor-in-Chief • Kylie Waytuck, Graphic Designer

Introduction

To be perfectly clear, this is not a guide for being humorous in order to get ahead in business. It was once argued that the benefits of humor in the workplace were worth pursuing. However, times change. Many people simply don't believe that being funny is the best solution to most people's professional problems. You may become funnier as you learn the comedic lessons herein, but if you want to be funnier at work, take an improv class. This book is about trying to get you promoted up the ranks, not called down to HR.

Whether you want to launch a company, get a promotion, or fight the AI takeover, emulating the skills of the masters of comedy can revolutionize your work life— and beyond. Remember, it's not about being funny. It's about thinking funny. That is, you need to start thinking differently. Can comedy save the world— or at least the business world? Let's find out.

Reverse It

A good reversal in comedy can reap huge payoffs—better premises, plots, and punchlines. In business, as in comedy, we can only achieve the payoff when we let go of the status quo.

In the world of business and beyond, you might find enacting the reversal to be challenging. You should expect resistance because you are likely thinking differently than others. You don't have to tell people what you are doing in the background. All that matters is the quality of the solutions to your problems. Choose a problem you are facing and start producing an opposing perspective. Now that you're well-versed in reversals, it's time to add a layer.

Act Out: Not One, Not Two, Three

Good things seem to come in threes. There is a completeness to the number three. A three-act structure is the norm in theater and movies. Papers and presentations have three parts: introduction, body, and conclusion. And of course, there's always the helpful reminder to 'stop, drop and roll.'

The same rule applies to business slogans, which tend to have three words or the cadence in a set of three. Psychological studies show that in convincing people, two arguments are too few while four are too many. So the next time you ask for a raise, give three compelling reasons. If you only have two, wait until you have three.

Step Out of the Stream

The world really doesn't want you to step out of the stream. Businesses pay lip service to the idea, but the general sentiment is: don't be difficult.

This is actually an advantage. That said, as a result, stepping out of the stream can be a delicate situation. You don't need to announce it. Pick your spots, be nice, and see how far you can push your boundary-pushing behavior.

Here are some questions to ask yourself as you contemplate how to apply the ideas of stepping out of the stream in your life.

- Am I in a liminal space? Where are the transitions and breaks from the day-to-day that can expose a new way of thinking?
- Where are the written and unwritten rules that I am living with?
- Where the real versus imagine consequences of breaking this or that rule?
- What decisions really scare you? What bigger risks can you seek out?
- When you encounter a constraint, can you say, "Good. This will give us an opportunity to be more creative?" What constraint can you lean into?

Good businesses and entrepreneurs don't get trapped in the norm or give in to the naysayers. Instead, they spin the status quo upside down to recognize the opportunities that are sitting right there in front of them— in front of us all. Stepping out of the stream, then, begins not in action, but in thought.

Act Out: Third Thoughts

Creativity is an appropriate, original solution to the problem. "We need to be more creative," really just means, "We need to solve this problem in a way that no one else has yet." An effective— albeit tedious— way to be creative is through extreme persistence. Most of the time, your first solution is appropriate but not original. And so you must keep trying.

A lack of originality explains what most people in comedy think of as joke stealing. Two comedians tell nearly the same joke. The person who told the joke first accuses the person who told the joke second. A key to truly creative and innovative solutions is to ignore your first thought. Have second thoughts. Third thoughts. Even better, have 100 thoughts!

Create a Chasm

Because of advances in technology, expansion of the economy, and healthy competition in most categories, nowadays it's pretty easy to get high-quality products and services. Especially with mature product lines, all competitors have already made the major improvements in the category. Once brands leveled up from the flat-footed insoles of Chuck Taylors to a legitimate arch-supporting athletic shoe, there wasn't a whole lot more they could do to make it better. Today, all credit cards offer pretty much the same key features: cashback rewards, great introductory rates, fraud protection, and the like.

Especially if the products or services are largely undifferentiated in your category, look for bolder chasm-creating ways to attract customers.

Act Out: An Audience of One

When you're trying to create a chasm, one of the challenges is overcoming the fear of disappointing people or making them angry. But angering and disappointing people is, in fact, a reasonable risk. You want something that your target audience can love, even if that means other people hate it. The radical extension of the notion of creating something that people love is to create something that only one person loves. And that person is you.

Comedians almost always begin their joke-writing process by focusing on things they find funny. Only after that, do they worry about building a bridge to the audience—if at all.

Cooperate to Innovate

Remember, there is no such thing as a lone genius. You need the genius of others, and the act of cooperating to innovate starts at the top. Leaders must gather the right people and support them to be their best. Only then can you truly make something epic.

In the context of your career, listening is difficult. If you hang back and listen first, someone else might get all the glory. And when you've presented a solution, you don't want to hear any naysayers, so you don't listen to feedback. Someone might disagree with you, and you might have to change your mind.

Be honest: how good are your listening skills? What if you planned your listening with the same intention as you planned what you say?

Act Out: Success by 1,000 Cuts

The epitome of the lean startups is Vaudeville. Comedians would test their jokes, dump the ones that didn't work, and improve the ones that did. Modern stand-ups do the same thing. They fail fast. They release their earliest prototypes to their target audience, get feedback, and iterate for improvements.

An agile mindset requires listening to customers early and often. While all this might make perfect sense for the start-up phase, growing businesses often stop embracing innovation and small, calculated failures after they've become well-established. They feel like they have too much to lose. So they play it safe—or so they think.

Write It or Regret It

Writing is hard. Writing is hard. Writing is hard. This might be the most difficult concept for you to implement in your life. Reading is like nutrition and writing is like exercise. It's time to start exercising.

The more you write—to remember, clarify, and communicate—the more you will take control of your ideas. You can architect your reversals, your steps, your chasms, your teams. You can intentionally sequence your actions to have the most impact. And as you'll soon learn, the order of experiences matter.

Act Out: Start Strong, End Stronger

Comedian Phyllis Diller said, "Comedy is like a plane flight. The most important part is taking off and landing." The landing part is obvious. Everyone knows how a good story has a great climax, and how a good joke has a punch line.

Starting with strong material suggests that good quality material is going to follow. A lull after a strong start is okay because the audience knows what you're capable of and will be patient with you.

Starting strong also helps you create an emotional reaction that leads to more emotional reactions. In the case of comedy, this emotion would be amusement, which helps make subsequent moments more amusing because you're already in a good mood.

Businesses create experiences for customers: events with a beginning, a middle, and an end. Retail is a series of experiences, just like customer service is an experience. A customer's experience must be positive in the moment, but maybe even more importantly, they must be positive in hindsight.

Work Hard or Hardly Work

Even if you embrace all the status quo-smashing mindsets of the first five chapters, in order for it to amount to anything you've got to rock the creative trifecta: Protect + Grind + Release. We all have our habits and our blind spots, so pay attention to yours. Get out of default and shift to intention. Intentionally showing up fully present with whatever mode is called for in the moment is vital. A master blacksmith knows how to pick up the hammer, and when to set it down.

Finally—stop having stupid meetings. Schedule them later in the day, rather than letting them take up prime creative time. And before you schedule a meeting at all, ask whether it's truly necessary.

Act Out: Turn Down the Lights

If you've ever been to a good comedy club, you may have noticed that it's set up in a particular way: a dimly lit room, often in a basement with low ceilings. The familiar red brick background, a stool on stage, and a single mic on a stand. Oh yeah, and it's a little chilly.

These are purposeful choices. Comedy club owners engineer their space to maximize laughter. The behavioral sciences back these choices either theoretically or empirically.

The same consideration for context goes into designing the best places for people to work. As design firms like Gensler and OfficeUntitled know, a bad environment can stifle even the best talent. That said, you don't have to be a multinational design firm to refine and improve your environment.

Take a Bigger Stage

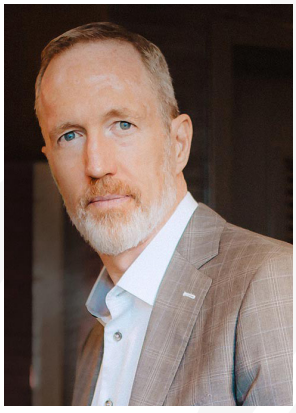
To reach your full potential, you may need to make some changes. Even if you feel you are on the path to your chosen definition of success, don't be afraid to consider what exists outside the lines. Ask others what you need to stop doing or what risks they think you should take. Think bigger. Create a BHAG—Big Hairy Audacious Goal. Hone in on your platform goal—and the path to get there—by asking yourself important questions about where you're headed.

Act Out: Getting from Yes to No

A comedian trying to build a career has an outbound mindset. Hold a spear and hunt for opportunities. You're saying yes to lots and lots of things. To everything! Saying yes is useful—providing exposure and opportunity to develop comedic chops. An outbound mindset absolutely helps facilitate success. But at some point, it also limits you.

Conclusion

Too many of us don't shift. We stay in the outbound mindset and keep throwing spears at every opportunity that comes along. But smart, successful people know how to say no to the things that are not the work they most want to do. They crowd out the small stuff. Stop hunting the small game and seek much, much bigger things.



Peter McGraw is a behavioral economist and global expert in the scientific study of humor. He directs The Humor Research Lab (HuRL), hosts the podcast I'M NOT JOKING, and is the co-author of The Humor Code: A Global Search for What Makes Things Funny. Peter's work has been covered by the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Harvard Business Review, NPR, and CNN. He's a sought-after speaker and professor who teaches MBA courses at the University of Colorado Boulder, University of California San Diego, and London Business School. A TV show based on his life is currently in development.

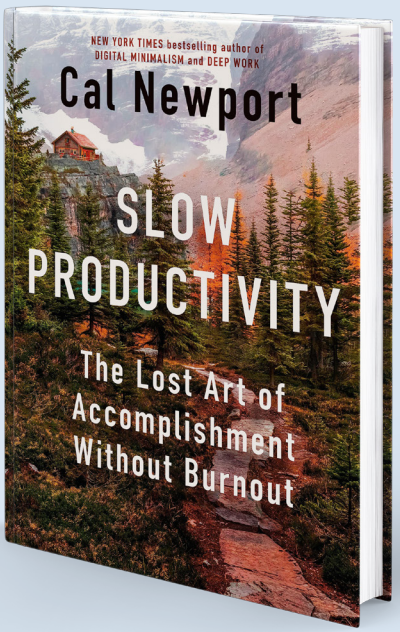
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Slow Productivity

Cal Newport

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Slow Productivity

The Lost Art of Accomplishment Without Burnout

By Cal Newport

Cal Newport is a professor of computer science at Georgetown University where he is also a founding member of the Center for Digital Ethics. In addition to his academic work, Newport is a New York Times bestselling author who writes for a general audience about the intersection of technology, productivity, and culture. His books have sold millions of copies and been translated into over forty languages. He is also on the contributor staff for The New Yorker and hosts the popular Deep Questions podcast.

A Book Review by Soundview

Redefining Productivity

The large majority of productivity books are focused on helping readers get more work done in less time. They are focused on increasing output while decreasing input, making productivity king. This is not Cal Newport's purpose in writing ***Slow Productivity: The Lost Art of Accomplishment Without Burnout.*** Newport's book is primarily directed at knowledge workers, and he believes that factory models of production do not work for knowledge work. While he realizes that knowledge work encompasses many different types of work, he believes that most knowledge workers can exhibit enough control and autonomy over their work that they can put steps in place to decrease their workload and extraneous work activities in order to buy them a slower work day. This slower pace, he maintains, often leads to greater achievement over time.

Factory Versus Knowledge Work

Newport opens the main part of his book with a vignette detailing a memo that Leslie Moonves, 1995 CEO of CBS, wrote to his employees when the studio was third in rankings. He noticed that at 3:30 on a Friday, many employees had already left for the day, and his missive berates these employees by stating that he is sure that the employees at rival stations were likely still in their offices at that time. This philosophy postulates that being in an office for more hours rather than for less provides greater results. Newport questions this notion by saying, "When it comes to the basic goal of getting things done, we actually know much less than we're letting on."

Many non-knowledge based sectors, Newport maintains, have clear benchmarks for productivity. Farm, mill, and factory work can all be measured by "the amount of output produced for a given amount of input," and this is experimented on in order to determine how to produce more output with less input. This can take a toll on the humans working in this system, but it also drives economic growth. This type of metric simply is not possible for most knowledge workers who work on various tasks and problems throughout the work day. He uses the example of an academic who chairs an important committee who is deemed less productive because he or she produced fewer papers as a result of this added but important responsibility. A lack of concrete benchmarks in knowledge work creates uncertainty

for managers of knowledge workers as well as for freelancers and others who work solely for themselves as they have no clear cut guidelines for managing their time or managing the time of those beneath them. He believes that because of this, people started "using visible activity as a crude proxy for actual productivity." Newport calls this as pseudo-productivity.

Newport goes on to elaborate more on the situation facing CBS employees in 1995. He believes this occurred during a critical time in the productivity saga because it is around this time that employers started bringing networked computers into offices, and this act made it possible for employees to talk about work through email and other means rather than actually do work. He refers to a study done by a software company that showed employees checking their email, on average, every six minutes. This talking about work combined with the twenty-first century worker's ability to work at all hours from home on mobile devices and laptops supercharged "our sense of overload and distraction, pushing us onto a collision course with the burnout crisis that afflicts us today."

"It seems," a quoted but unnamed strategic planner says, "like the benefits of technology have created the ability to stack more into our day and onto our schedules than we have the capacity to handle while maintaining a level of quality which makes the things worth doing." It is this lessening and devaluing of quality that Newport sees as a major casualty of the way knowledge work productivity is seen today.

Slow Productivity

To explain his alternate view of productivity for knowledge workers, Newport turns to the slow movement. This movement began after McDonald's planned a 1986 opening of a new and very large restaurant in Rome's Piazza di Spagna. At the same time McDonald's was facing opposition from Italians, a man named Carlo Petrini was launching the Slow Food movement, saying, "Against those – or, rather, the vast majority – who confuse efficiency with frenzy, we propose the vaccine of an adequate portion of sensual gormandise pleasures, to be taken with slow and prolonged enjoyment." Petrini believes, according to Newport, that people find pleasure in pointing out a system's flaws but that "sustainable change… requires providing people with an enjoyable and life-affirming alternative." This became a revolution in Newport's eyes when other slow systems started coming into vogue, including Slow Cities, Slow Medicine, and Slow Media, among others.

Newport credits the pandemic with giving people the opportunity to question the way work is produced, and he uses Apple employees as an example of people's desire for a change from the status quo when they protested an imperative that they return to the office for at least a portion of the work week. Meanwhile others began to consider other options for their work week. For example, a UK study showed that many companies chose to follow a four day work week after participating in a study in which this work week demonstrated very positive results. While Newport believes shorter work weeks and telecommuting can be beneficial, he does not see them as sufficient for reversing the current level of burnout because it will not affect the overall culture that makes haste the default in the first place. He believes that pseudo-productivity must be abandoned and a new alternative must come to fruition.

Newport proposes the following definition for knowledge work: "The economic activity in which knowledge is transformed into an artifact with market value through the application of cognitive effort." He believes that people can look to traditional knowledge workers such as artists and writers to come to a clearer understanding of how more mainstream knowledge workers like HR professionals can manage their productivity. He believes that it is freedom that allows for the creation of value, and people in these traditional knowledge fields generally have this freedom. While the solutions for different types of knowledge workers will not all be the same, he believes insights can be gleaned from the freedom some knowledge workers generally have. Eventually Newport coined slow productivity, in line with other slow movements. He describes this as "A philosophy for organizing knowledge work efforts in a sustainable and meaningful manner, based on the following three principles: 1. Do fewer things. 2. Work at a natural pace. 3. Obsess over quality."

Do Fewer Things

"Do fewer things" is Newport's first principle of Slow Productivity. He describes the picture painted of Jane Austin writing her four major novels all before she died at the age of 41. The picture painted of her is of a woman stealing free moments to write out her novels on pieces of paper throughout the day. This gives off the impression that the key to creative success is to simply squeeze more into the day. This is not the lesson that Newport derives from Austin's story. Rather, he attributes her success to her steady work over the course of many years, the rather slow pace at which she actually wrote her novels. He says that a closer look at Austin's life reveals that when her father closed the school the family was running, she was suddenly afforded a lot of free time, and it was during this period that she was particularly productive. He quotes Austin biographer Claire Tomalin as saying that it was because she was able to "abstract herself from the daily life going on around her" that she was able to develop her literary voice. When her home situation shifted again and asked much more of her, she halted her writing, ultimately finishing her books a decade later when her home life once again afforded her plenty of unstructured time. Newport uses this to emphasize how better results come from doing less rather than more. He lays this out in his first principle stating, "Strive to reduce your obligations to the point where you can easily imagine accomplishing them with time to spare. Leverage this reduced load to more fully embrace and advance the small number of projects that matter most." He believes that this can be possible in most professional settings.

One problem facing modern knowledge workers is overhead, referring to the amount of tasks that need to be completed for each new project. He says, "As your to-do list grows, so does the total amount of overhead tax you're paying." These extraneous but necessary tasks begin to take away much of a person's work time since there will necessarily be a limited number of hours in each day. He believes that as workload increases, people can

> *When people focus on fewer projects, they can also focus on quality more than quantity."*

begin to spend their entire day on overhead activities. This problem increased during the pandemic for multiple reasons, not least of which because collaboration is less efficient when it is not performed in an office. Instead of walking to a colleague's office to ask a question, while working remotely, an employee may need to set up a zoom call which requires further attention to overhead tasks and lengthens the entire process. He explains how a person who can complete a single report in seven hours, can write an entire report in one day. If that same employee, however, works on four different reports over the course of that day, it will ultimately take more hours to complete because so much time will be spent on various overhead activities, doubling the amount of time it takes to complete a report.

Newport believes that when people take on fewer projects, they can limit the time spent on overhead activities. This is not the only benefit, however, to reducing the number of projects. When people focus on fewer projects, they can also focus on quality more than quantity. He says that science as well as intuition teach us that "our brains work better when we're not rushing." By doing fewer things, he maintains that we are not actually accomplishing fewer things because "focusing intensely on a small number of tasks, waiting to finish each before bringing on something new, is objectively a much better way to use our brains to produce valuable output." This is not what most people do, however. Saying no is difficult for people, so many will choose to only say no to Zoom meetings or other tasks when they are so distressed that they are willing to let the other party down. This level of distress is usually quite high. He shares numerous examples of knowledge workers who were able to say no to more tasks and found themselves happier and producing better work. He does not believe that overload is a necessary component of knowledge work: rather, he attributes it to the "crude ways in which we self-manage our work volume."

Newport encourages his reader to create a concrete system to follow in order to limit projects. First this can be done by limiting the number of missions you focus on. He defines a mission as "any ongoing goal or service that directs your professional life." With regards to missions, it is best to err on the side of too few than too many, and he believes many people feel distress with five or more missions. Then he goes on to suggest limiting projects, and a project is defined as "a work-related initiative that cannot be completed in a single session." He says that most of the tasks he performs during his day are in the service of projects. He suggests that when approached with a new project, it is best to tell the person assigning the project exactly how much you are working on at the moment and when they could expect you to reasonably complete this task. They can then determine if they have someone with more time to complete the project or if the project should be delayed. Lastly, Newport encourages people to focus on one project per day. Likely other tasks will be required during the average day, but focusing primarily on one project allows a person to see real progress made. Other tactics he suggests are to put tasks on auto-pilot when possible and make other people work more by completing small tasks that can make your large tasks more manageable.

A Natural Pace

Newport discusses the importance of seasonality in work. This seasonality is natural to agricultural workers whose days and lives are dictated by the seasons. He also refers to great thinkers of times past who would have found the current frenetic pace of life unnerving and who focused primarily on what could be produced over a lifetime rather than on what could be produced over a set period of time. He explains his second principle by saying, "Don't rush your most important work. Allow it instead to unfold along a sustainable timeline, with variations in intensity, in settings conducive to brilliance."

To explain this concept, he refers to studies comparing the lives of hunter gatherer cultures in the world with that of agricultural workers, showing that hunter gatherers have more free time in their days, interspersed between working hours. Their work is not evenly spread out; it is completed in bursts. The Industrial Revolution eliminated much of the seasonality of work because employees could work evenly throughout the day and night and also year round. They were not limited by seasonal or daily cycles. Knowledge workers generally have additional hurdles because their work tasks are not conducive to unionization, and as such, these tasks can infringe on entire days, surpassing the traditional eight hour work day.

Newport suggests his reader become more comfortable with taking longer at tasks, and this can be accomplished by making a five year plan and focusing on that for important goals. Workers can also double project timelines in order to complete them in a more intentional manner. Workers can also simplify their daily schedule by including fewer tasks and appointments. The latter can be accomplished by scheduling time to work on your own tasks for every amount of time you dedicate to working with other people. Finally, he suggests workers embrace seasonality by ushering in slow seasons in which less work is accomplished by turning down more work and leaving the office at 5:00. This works best when knowledge workers plan to finish major projects before this slow time and wait to start new ones until after. This doesn't have to be on a months-long basis, however, as seasonality can apply to the work week as well by implementing practices such as declining meetings occurring during a certain day or time period each week.

Obsession with Quality

Newport's last principle is to "Obsess over the quality of what you produce, even if this means missing opportunities in the short term. Leverage the value of these results to gain more and more freedom in your efforts over the long term." He explains that in most professions, there are a couple of activities that are core to that position, and he urges his readers to insist on quality in these core activities. This is important because people "should be focused on the quality of what you produce because quality turns out to be connected in unexpected ways to our desire to escape pseudo-productivity and embrace something slower." Newport uses the example of how Steve Jobs limited the different types of computers Apple produced in order to make the ones they did produce as good as possible. Newport maintains that in many other fields "the pursuit of quality demanded simplicity," and his own study reinforced this. One way one person implemented this idea was to limit emails to one hour per day, simplifying his day. Another simplified her work life by focusing on just two major projects. Newport believes "that an obsession with quality… both demands and enables slowness."

Central to quality is taste. Newport explains how people who excel in a field such as writing have great taste in good writing, but their skills do not necessarily live up to their taste when they begin. He reiterates the advice of NPR's Ira Glass who tells people to keep producing work as you work to bridge the gap between your taste and your abilities. Also crucial is a desire to improve your tastes so that you can keep growing to meet your ever expanding standards. Newport details C.S. Lewis and his writing group, the Inklings which included some notable writers including J.R.R. Tolkien. Groups like this are not just effective for writers. He explains that professional groups such as these can help professionals elevate their own taste and give them more to strive for. People can elevate their taste when they work with like minded colleagues.

While Newport focuses on three primary principles to lay out his plan for a more sane professional schedule for knowledge workers, he intersperses his book with numerous examples of people who have succeeded both professionally and personally by limiting the number of tasks and pursuits they pursue in order to live a more simple work life that allows for more quality work. Because he does not believe that quantity should be the main benchmark of success for knowledge workers, he details ways in which to limit the quantity of time spent in order to increase the quality of output. Some of the examples he provides are of unknown people who completed his survey and others are well known musicians, writers, and artists. He maintains that while it might be easier for knowledge workers in certain fields to have control over their schedule, he maintains that most knowledge workers can implement his strategies and principles in order to be proactive, high quality workers while avoiding the burnout that seems endemic today in the field of knowledge work.

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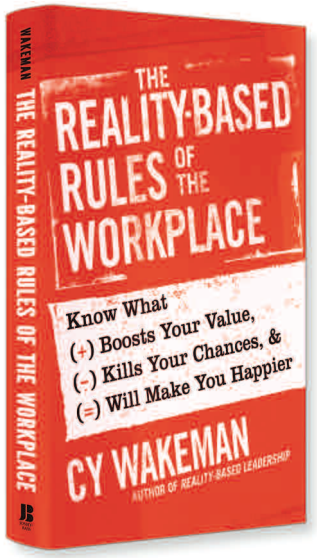
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Summary

September 2013

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Career & Self-Development



The Reality-Based Rules of the Workplace

Know What Boosts Your Value, Kills Your Chances, and Will Make You Happier

by Cy Wakeman

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Many employees feel unrecognized and under-rewarded, and studies show that workplace dissatisfaction is at record highs. But what if the things that are currently making you unhappy simply lost their power over you? What if you could go to work feeling energetic and excited regardless of any external circumstances? What does it take to become valued and appreciated at the office?

The Reality-Based Rules of the Workplace reveals a formula for understanding how your manager calculates your value to the organization. Based on research with more than 50,000 people, Cy Wakeman reveals a formula for measuring your current performance, your future potential and your "emotional expense" — the toll your actions and attitudes takes on the people around you, which is your single biggest detractor. Only when you know your true score can you improve it.

The Reality-Based Rules of the Workplace is the essential guide for boosting your value, owning your career, and becoming the kind of employee no organization can afford to lose.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to accurately evaluate and boost your performance.
- Why workplace dissatisfaction is optional.
- What actions at work make you more valuable at work.
- How to face workplace change head on.
- How to succeed in the face of extenuating circumstances.

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Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries®, 500 Old Forge Lane, Suite 501, Kennett Square, PA 19348 USA
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Vol. 35, No. 9 (3 parts), Part 1, September 2013 • Order #35-21

THE COMPLETE SUMMARY:
THE REALITY-BASED RULES OF THE WORKPLACE

by Cy Wakeman

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From *The Reality-Based Rules of the Workplace* by Cy Wakeman. Copyright © 2013 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Summarized with permission from the publisher, Jossey-Bass. 186 pages, $27.95. ISBN: 978-1-118-41368-5. To purchase this book, go to www.amazon.com or www.bn.com.

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Introduction

Your true value as an employee is not dependent on economic conditions — good or bad. It is based on the value that you bring to your organization, the market value of your work, and the return on investment that you deliver both economically and emotionally now and into the future. Nearly all of these factors are within your control. You must get clear about the value you truly bring to your organization by using the New Value Equation:

Your Value = Current Performance + Future Potential – 3 x Emotional Expensiveness.

PART I: THE NEW VALUE EQUATION

Your Current Performance

The main reason I believe performance reviews as they are used in most companies are an inadequate measure of true value is that they seem to create an alternate reality that is divorced from companies' actual results. In other words, in most organizations, there is no correlation between employees' yearly performance ratings and the results that the company is experiencing.

I'm going to show you how to give yourself a true rating.

How to Rate Your Current Performance

Consider the following questions honestly, and rate yourself from 1 (lowest, not true) to 5 (highest, very true). Base your ratings on your actions, not your intentions.

1. I am on track to deliver on every goal outlined for me by my boss this year.
2. I am consistent in my attendance, my work and my results.
3. I improve each year as a matter of course to keep up with changing expectations — without expecting more in return.
4. I am moving forward with purpose and not still taking credit for the accomplishments of years past.
5. The people I spend the most time with at work are top performers.
6. I have recently added to my job description on my own initiative.
7. I set goals for myself beyond the goals my supervisor sets.
8. I regularly ask for feedback on my performance from my boss and my peers.
9. My performance compares favorably with that of my peers both in my company and in my industry.
10. I collaborate well with others and have good professional relationships.

Now, take the number of total points, and divide by 10. That is your number for Current Performance. This can be a tough reality check if you have not been evaluated according to tough criteria like these in the past.

Based on the assessment above, you fall somewhere on a continuum from 1 to 5, where

1 = Not meeting expectations

2 = Sometimes meeting expectations

3 = Fully meeting expectations

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Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries® (ISSN 0747-2196), 500 Old Forge Lane, Suite 501, Kennett Square, PA 19348 USA, a division of Concentrated Knowledge Corp. Published monthly. Subscriptions starting at $99 per year.
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Rebecca S. Clement, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Amanda Langen**, Graphic Designer; **Jeannette Scott**, Contributing Editor

4 = Exceeding expectations

5 = Far exceeding expectations

Got Your Number? Now Raise It!

Here are five questions to ask to help get and keep high, truthful and sustainable performance numbers:

1. Who are the top performers to emulate? Find out who the top performers are in your company — those seen by the organization as curve-breakers. If you want what they have, go do what they did. Study them! Ask them to mentor you.

2. What are your goals? Get clear on the expectations of your position. Your job description represents the bare minimum expectations for your position — not what you need to do to succeed but what you need to do not to fail.

3. Where do your goals fit into the big picture? Now that you have clarity on your individual goals and role, get your organization's strategic plan, and study it. Make sure you understand your organization's goals, challenges, industry, environment and how your goals fit in.

4. Why keep your eyes on the prize? Most people only look at their goals twice a year — when they create them and when they are about to be measured on them. Set yourself apart by reviewing yours often.

5. How will you reach your goals? What exactly has to happen by when and to what standard? Don't leave your success to a strategy of hope — track it. That which gets measured, gets accomplished. Last, be consistent. True value and trustworthiness are the result of consistent attendance, great attitude and results with no surprises or let-downs. ●

Your Future Potential

You can — and should — be aiming higher than survival of the next round of layoffs. Instead of trying to protect yourself from changing circumstances and expectations on the horizon, you need to grow into them.

How to Rate Your Future Potential

Consider the following questions honestly, and rate yourself from 1 (lowest, not true) to 5 (highest, very true). Base your ratings on your actions, not your intentions.

1. I make an effort to learn as much as I can about changes that will affect me.
2. If I want something, I work hard to get it.
3. When something good happens to me, I feel it is because I've earned it.
4. Failure is a great teacher, and I work to extract its lessons.
5. I am an early adopter of new technology that can help me do my job better.
6. A person can change his personality and behavior patterns.
7. I work to change or improve regardless of whether my boss has identified a need for development.
8. For the issues that have come up in the past three months, I can identify specific things I could have done differently to change the outcome.
9. I am involved in mentoring others.
10. I have participated in a development experience that was not funded or arranged by my organization in the past year.

Now, take the number of total points and divide by 10. That is your current number for Future Potential. Does it seem fair to you? If you're thinking you're overrating or underrating yourself, rest assured that the marketplace will let you know when you have it right.

Based on the assessment above, you fall somewhere on a continuum from 1 to 5, where

1 = Being quickly outdated

2 = Complacent, not trying hard enough

3 = Keeping up with expectations

4 = Exceeding expectations

5 = Leading the pack

Maximizing Your Future Potential

Following are five tactics for improving your future potential:

Tactic #1: Get Reflective. If you have scored a 3 or lower for Future Potential, look back at what it would take to score a 5. Make a list of where you're falling short. How do you compare to people applying for similar jobs to your own right now? Would you be the top candidate if you were interviewing for your job?

Tactic #2: Get Beyond the Baseline. What are you doing with the opportunities you have? If you are offered extra training by your company, consider it part of your education. Show willingness and really put that opportunity to use. Before any course, set yourself a goal for what you intend to take away from it — the way you intend to change your behavior. Seek out your own opportunities. To truly get ahead of the curve, you must get zealous about learning and growth.

Tactic #3: Get Challenged. Your Future Potential depends on your learning agility and your passion for your own evolution. When was the last time you learned a new skill? Subscribed to a journal that was not required reading? Tried something new that you could

fail at without fear? Get interested and evolve both inside and outside the workplace.

Tactic #4: Get Connected. Sometimes it's necessary to go through a few months of adjustment and growing pains just to stay current. New technology in particular gets integrated without much discussion these days. You have a choice to lean forward into it and bond with your colleagues over a shared challenge, or resist. Resistance takes longer. It holds you back in your career and can make you less employable on a skills level and in terms of your attitude.

Tactic #5: Get Multigenerational. At this point in time, three generations coexist in the workplace, and each has its strengths and weaknesses. Get clear on what your generation brings to the table and what you need to learn from the other two.

Those of you nearing retirement have experience to offer. Pass on your trade secrets, the knowledge and unique skills you have perfected over the years. Stop judging the younger generations, and teach them instead.

My advice to those of you mid-career is to be bridge builders. You raised the younger generation, and you were raised by the older generation. You have great translation skills to offer, so step up and adapt. Don't be afraid to give feedback to both generations. Adopt the newest members of the workforce. Let them teach you, in particular when it comes to technology. This generation will remind you that work can include play.

To the new generation: We love that you come with great new skill sets and shortcuts made possible by your fluency in technology and creative new ways of approaching work. Share your optimism and your exuberance for finding new and better ways, but don't dismiss the old ways. Be careful what you think you know for sure. Get adopted quickly by mentors who will fill in the gaps in your knowledge about the history and complexity of your organization. And don't skimp on the basics like attendance and consistency. Regardless of the high-level contributions you make in other aspects of your job, without building this foundation, you won't get the credibility that allows others to trust you with bigger and better projects. ●

Your Emotional Expensiveness

Almost all of you are familiar with the concept of "high" versus "low" maintenance when it comes to relationships and would be capable of categorizing your friends and family according to this rubric — who's bringing drama, who's not: who, in aggregate, is more of a "taker" than a "giver."

Emotional Expensiveness Is Costing You

While she excelled in customer service because of her focus on staying neutral and keeping boundaries, Carol assumed that inside the company and with some members of her team, she could vent or show her feelings of being rushed and overwhelmed.

As Carol moved up the organizational chart and her duties became more demanding, her dramatic ways began to take a toll on her perceived value in the company. She gained a reputation as a drama queen that outshone her current results, and she could no longer rest on her past achievements. Carol said, "My first clue that something was wrong came when I and two other VPs were given a new supervisor. The two others got the same supervisor — a senior executive. I was told to report down the chain of command to someone else — actually, someone I knew quite well and considered a friend. I felt comfortable asking her, 'Hey, what's the deal? Didn't the SVP want me as a direct report?' I was half-joking, but my new supervisor became serious. 'Carol,' she said, 'drama comes with you.'"

Carol's credibility was eventually so eroded that her numbers could no longer protect her, and she was let go.

Rate Your Emotional Expensiveness

As honestly as you can, rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5 for each of the following signifiers of Emotional Expensiveness. On this continuum,

1 = Never
2 = Rarely (one or twice per year)
3 = Sometimes (every couple of months or less)
4 = Often (monthly)
5 = Daily

Remember to base your rating on your actions, not your intentions.

1. I share my opinions regarding others' decisions and behaviors.
2. I need frequent encouragement to stick with a difficult task.
3. I tend not to be happy with my work until it has been praised by someone else.
4. I meet feedback with defensiveness or dismissiveness.
5. I believe I'm entitled to my opinions at work.
6. The way I'm feeling usually comes through loud and clear to my colleagues.
7. I spend as much time talking about my employer and colleagues as talking to them. I have good days and bad days at work.

8. I only support what I've been consulted on.
9. When I get angry at work, I express it either directly or through passive-aggressive behavior.
10. I share my personal and family problems at work.

Add your answers together, and divide by 10. Now, plug your numbers for Current Performance, Future Potential and Emotional Expensiveness into the new value equation to calculate your current value:

Your Value = Current Performance + Future Potential – 3 x Emotional Expense

If you come up with a negative number for value, congratulate yourself for being honest. If you are looking at a negative value right now, know that you are far from alone. In fact, 83 percent of those who have been receiving high performance ratings scored negative numbers when first evaluated with the New Value Equation.

PART 2: THE FIVE REALITY-BASED RULES OF THE WORKPLACE

Rule #1: Your Level of Accountability Determines Your Level of Happiness

So don't hope to be lucky. Choose to be happy.

Personal Accountability is the belief that you are fully responsible for your own actions and their consequences. It is a choice, a mind-set, an expression of integrity.

Your challenges are real — you're not imagining them — but they don't need to become your excuses. You will get results when you stop complaining, blaming and focusing on what is happening "to" you and focus instead on what you can do within your current reality and with your current challenges to compete, to deliver and to succeed.

People who are accountable have an internal motivation to succeed no matter what their obstacles. It starts with a commitment to do whatever it takes to get the job done. Without a foundation of accountability, engagement fluctuates like the tides, rising and falling with the fortunes of the organization and the moods of its employees. Many companies have gotten off track by focusing on trying to raise your engagement when they should have been working with you on your accountability. As a result, many of you have come to believe that it is your leaders' job to perfect your circumstances in exchange for the gift of your work.

Factors of Personal Accountability

There are four factors that contribute directly to your level of Personal Accountability:

Factor #1: Commitment. Committed people are willing. They lean into challenges and do what it takes to get the results they committed to even if they don't have all the information or resources they think they need.

Factor #2: Resilience. When you are resilient, you feel calm, purposeful and confident in your ability to produce results regardless of your circumstances. Throwing up your hands and quitting at the first obstacle or resorting to excuses is not an option you consider. You are tenacious, and you bounce back quickly from setbacks.

Factor #3: Ownership. When you are feeling true ownership, you're able to give the gift of your work unconditionally. You don't look to others to validate your efforts or to give you the motivation to do your job. No one else has the power — or responsibility — to motivate you. A key part of ownership is the ability to clearly identify your part in your results.

Factor #4: Continuous Learning. Doing great work is not about never making mistakes or failing. It's about making sure that those mistakes have the minimum impact on those you serve and that your failures inspire and inform new strategies in the future.

Rule #2: Suffering Is Optional

So ditch the drama!

The first major source of drama in most workplaces is judgment. Our minds are prone to judgment, and left unchecked, they will use it as a continual source of fuel. If something happens outside the realm of our expectations or wishes, we start to critique, complain and defend our point of view instead of choosing a more productive reaction.

William, who worked in the shipping department of an electronic components manufacturer, was in one of my sessions, and I asked him what was causing him drama and frustration at work. Before the question was out of my mouth, his face clouded over, and he went on to describe the production line that put the finishing touches on each component before shipping.

They were incredibly slow — excessively picky, in his opinion. They held up shipping and caused delays that angered customers, and he was the one who had to explain and apologize. When he'd been in charge of that line, it had been super fast and customers had never complained. I asked him how much of his day was spent focusing on that group, and he said, "Probably about 80

percent." I asked him what he spent most of that time doing, and he admitted that he was mostly judging and critiquing them, complaining about them to others, stewing while he did his work, and bugging them to hurry up. He was asking himself, "Why are they so slow? Who is going to take responsibility for this? When will the powers that be figure it out and step in?" Very frustrating, unaccountable questions that were getting him nowhere except deeper into the drama about why he was right and how things "should" be.

Would You Rather Be Right or Happy?

If you want misery, stay connected to the belief that you are right — be the judge of the world. If you want happiness and efficacy, stop judging, and start helping. I asked William, instead of judging the other employees on the line, what could he do to help the line go faster? He came up with a list of actions he could take:

- He could check the tracking software instead of interrupting them with questions;
- He could update the checklist he created while he was on that line to accommodate the newest products and share it with them;
- He could share a technique he had learned in his days on the line that would speed up their decision-making process;
- He could change the way he pulled product from the line.

Some of these actions required more work on his part, but at least he would feel he had some impact on the situation. It turned out that there were a lot of actions he could take with the 80 percent of his day that had been given over to "shoulds."

I saw William a few months later, and he had a big smile on his face. The line was going faster, the customers were complaining less, and he felt great because his actions had contributed to that outcome in a way that his complaints never had.

Edit Your Story. Respond to the Facts.

Any time you begin to experience stressful thoughts and feelings about an event or another person, pause. Ask yourself:

1. What story am I telling myself right now?
2. What do I know for sure? (only the facts)
3. How do I act when I believe my story?
4. Without my story, what would I be doing to help?
5. What is the very next thing I can do to add value right now? The answer to this question is your Simple Instruction — the next best action you can take to eliminate your negative feeling and move forward in a constructive way. Do your work, find the simple instructions, and go do that.

The point of this exercise is to make sure you are responding to the facts of a situation versus your story (all the thoughts you've made up about it). ●

Rule #3: Buy-In Is Not Optional

Your action, not opinion, adds value.

I have the opportunity to work with many people in support roles, such as information technology professionals, whose leaders are seeking to change the mindsets of their highly qualified employees from "order taker" to "solutions provider" so that they can bring more value to their organizations.

As I lay out the fact that their role is one of support, they are eager to give me reasons why those they serve don't deserve it. One woman stands out in my memory. She was extremely frustrated and came to me after our session, saying, "Cy, it isn't my job to teach every employee basic computer skills. Some of them can't even type. Others don't even keep track of their passwords, let alone use the system we developed to its full functionality."

She was probably right. But what she was doing was not helping.

I asked her about the mission, the role of her department as a whole, and she said it was to ensure that employees had the technology to facilitate their business goals and that they were getting the most out of it. Then I asked her what her individual role in this larger goal was, and that's when the light bulb went on. If the IT department's role was to help employees get the most out of the technology they were provided, employees' basic computer skills were not beyond her remit. Far from it.

Meanwhile, her opinions and editorializing — about how everyone should be tested for technology skills prior to being hired and how the company was wasting money on IT systems that were over employees' heads — were stopping her from fulfilling her role at work. She was adding little value, and her Emotional Expensiveness was through the roof. She made people feel so stupid that they were afraid to call on her for support.

One of the new realities in the workplace is that our opinions actually add very little value. If you are using your expertise to critique ideas, point out the pitfalls of every plan and the weaknesses of others, you are holding

your company back. Top value comes from being able to deliver despite these challenges, not from pointing them out.

To succeed, your buy-in is not optional, and action, not opinion, adds value. ●

Rule #4: Say 'Yes' to What's Next

Change is opportunity.

It's not your boss's job to lead you through change. It's your job to get flexible and flow seamlessly into what is next.

Visionaries lean into change, push for it, and make it happen. Here are four capabilities that visionaries share:

Visionary Capability #1: Be Prepared

Resistance to change is very expensive — it's a drag on the system. Being bad at change can no longer be laughed off or excused as a personal idiosyncrasy. Employers need flexibility and a commitment to change when it's necessary. People who have a high score for Future Potential, who are developing more quickly than the demands of their workplaces or the market, are unfazed by change. Why? Because they live in a state of readiness. If you have not done what you needed to do to stay current, then you are backed into a corner, and your only option when responding to change is resistance.

Visionary Capability #2: Reframe

Mental flexibility is an essential attribute of a visionary. Reframing is choosing to see your situation as a great opportunity rather than a challenge or an assault, even when you are not sure what the opportunity is going to be.

One great way to reframe is to question what virtue your situation will help you develop so that you can improve. If fate lands you with an annoying intern whose foibles have stopped being cute, consider it your opportunity to work on patience. If your steak is too rare when you're out to dinner, practice courage in politely sending it back for more fire.

Another reframing technique is to see through people's behavior to their needs. People usually need your love the most when they deserve it the least. A manager raging about a dropped call is passionate about serving the customer (albeit in an Emotionally Expensive way). A coworker who is nagging you about a project deadline is probably getting pressure from her boss. She needs reassurance that you are on top of it.

The truth is, we know very little about how things should work out, so we need to be open and trust that we are capable of handling whatever is next.

Visionary Capability #3: Give Yourself Permission to Fail

Change means risk, and that's way too scary for people who are so captivated by their egos or their unrealistic expectations that they don't see failure as an option. But the truth is that we all tend to overrate the risk of change and underrate the risk of maintaining the status quo. The cost of doing nothing is often higher. One way to move into vision quickly is to analyze the risk of what you fear will happen. If the worst-case scenario occurred, would it really have the impact you are imagining? Or is your story about it what scares you more?

Visionary Capability #4: Move on From Your Mistakes With Confidence

The competency that allows you to succeed in new circumstances comes after confidence, not before. Confidence is what you build through thinking, changing your mind-set and inquiring about untrue stories. Competence is what you then build by doing. So when you realize something is not working, or you have made a mistake, do what you can to fix it, leverage your learning, move on as quickly as you can, and do better next time. Don't let your failures become your identity — either in your mind or in the minds of others. ●

Rule #5: You Will Always Have Extenuating Circumstances

Succeed anyway.

Your reality is not the reason why you can't succeed. It is the circumstances under which you must succeed. Here are some of the most common barriers I hear about and how you can and should overcome them:

Excuse #1: My Boss Is a Jerk

Bosses come in all the varieties that humans do and you will have good and bad bosses. What's good about the bad ones is that you get really competent at managing yourself. Figure out your simple instructions — the next thing you can do to add value.

High-value players change their beliefs, not their bosses. If you believe that you can't work well for a bad boss, you are limited to only being able to succeed with a great boss, and those odds are not in your favor. If your boss is really bad, and you are considering calling the employee hotline to lodge a complaint, first

make absolutely sure that your complaint is really about your boss and not a lack of accountability on your part. Ninety-nine percent of calls to employee hotlines are just people blaming others for their circumstances, essentially confessing their own incompetence. There are things you can change and things you can't. Part of being based in reality is knowing the difference between the two.

Excuse #2: My Coworkers Are Difficult/Bullies/Rude/Indifferent/(Insert Adjective Here)

At work, you have to spend a lot of time working closely with people you didn't choose. This leads to conflicts that may have you spending far too much of your time worrying about what is and is not under your control. When faced with a challenging situation, look first to yourself. Take a quick inventory of the things you are doing that may have exacerbated the situation and what you do to ease it.

High-Value Players Confront Coworker Conflicts. Unless there is a clear-cut case of bullying or a real power differential, you are better off resolving the situation directly than taking it to your boss, complaining to others, or creating a triangle of any kind: you know, those times when you are tempted to tattle or gossip instead of confronting the issue head-on. If you find yourself talking to others about the person with whom you have a conflict more often than you talk to that person directly, you are making the problem bigger, and yours is fast becoming the greater crime.

Excuse #3: My Team Is Really Dysfunctional

When you are struggling while working in a group, keep in mind this counterintuitive truth: Most conflicts do not come from personality clashes. They come from lack of clarity. The root cause of conflicts among people is ambiguity in goals, roles and procedures. If you have these three things clear, there is no such thing as "personality conflict." You can work with anyone.

High-Value Players Respect and Nurture Team Dynamics. Although success requires individual traits like gumption, initiative and resilience, its ultimate expression can only be realized in the context of a team.

A team player is often more valuable than a star. Whereas a star might have an inflated sense of his contribution, value independence over making it work, and expect to be asked his opinion before he joins the effort, a team player says "yes" early and often.

A team player builds on the accomplishments of others and shares information rather than hoarding it to protect his position. Team players compensate for one another's shortcomings.

If you want support, give support. If you want openness, be open. If you want cooperation, be cooperative.

Excuse #4: The Culture at My Company Is Hostile/Toxic

When people talk about the "toxic culture" at their organizations, they're really talking about their shared reasons, stories and excuses for their lack of results.

A company's culture may take years to turn. This has long been used as an excuse for not trying to change anything within a company. But within the larger culture are microclimates — anywhere you find 10 to 12 people working together — that are far easier to change. So get started changing that.

High-Value Players Know When to Walk Away. Whatever happens, it is important to know your worth — not just the dollar amount of your salary but your worth as a great employee and a human being. You are more than any job. If you are doing the things I advise and they are not working, it may be that you have a bad fit where you are, and it's time to move on.

The problem isn't really stay versus go. It's that you must not do what I call "stay and hate" or "go and blame." If you do either of these things, you will not be able to flourish in the job you're in or in your next job. Instead, you need to learn what you can where you are, and be so accountable that you mine the situation for every possible lesson.

If you do make the decision to leave, you will know you have tried everything and be confident that you're not simply running away from difficulty and taking your problems with you. If you stay, make it a conscious choice and not a passive one. Do it joyfully. ●

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The Reality-Based Rules of the Workplace*, you'll like:

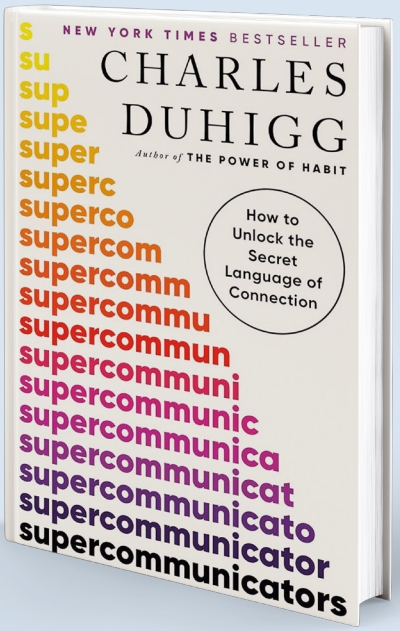
1. ***Linchpin* by Seth Godin.** Linchpins are the people who are the essential building blocks of great organizations. Learn how to become one.
2. ***Goals!* by Brian Tracy.** Tracy identifies the self-imposed barriers that so many people put between themselves and their goals.
3. ***You Already Know How to Be Great* by Rebecca R. Merrill, Alan Fine.** Fine reveals his simple approach to achieving breakthrough performance through a process called G.R.O.W. (Goal, Reality, Options, Way Forward).

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Supercommunicators

Charles Duhigg

Book Snaps™
In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.



Supercommunicators

How to Unlock the Secret Language of Connection

By Charles Duhigg

Charles Duhigg is a Pulitzer Prize–winning investigative journalist and the author of *The Power of Habit* and *Smarter Faster Better.* A graduate of Harvard Business School and Yale College, he is a winner of the National Academies of Sciences, National Journalism, and George Polk awards. He writes for The New Yorker and other publications, was previously a senior editor at The New York Times, and occasionally hosts the podcast How To!

A Book Review by Soundview

Communication as a Superpower

What types of people are helpful in jury deliberations? What communication tactics work best for doctors who want to get their patients on board with medical treatments? Why are some people able to connect with other people easily while others struggle to make meaningful connections? These are a few of the questions Charles Duhigg answers in his book, ***Supercommunicators: How to Unlock the Secret Language of Connection.***

Duhigg quotes George Bernard Shaw as saying, "The biggest problem with communication is the illusion that it has taken place." Duhigg tries to help his reader avoid this false illusion and instead find true communication and connection with others through the use of specific techniques that facilitate effective communication on any number of topics. He does this by exploring what goes wrong in certain conversations and as well as by helping his reader see that the two-fold goal of most conversations is to both figure out how the other person sees the world and to help them understand the way we see the world. These are skills that Duhigg believes can be taught, and they are important because "It's no secret the world has become increasingly polarized, that we struggle to hear and be heard. But if we know how to sit down together, listen to each other and, even if we can't resolve every disagreement, find ways to hear one another and say what we need, we can coexist and thrive." Because of this, Duhigg's is a book about a hope for a better future.

Types of Conversation

Charles Duhigg begins discussing his matching principle by discussing Jim Lawler, a Central Intelligence Agency spy recruiter. Lawler faced many challenges at the outset of his career. He failed to recruit others, and at one time did not realize that the person he was trying to recruit was actually an undercover KGB agent who was trying to recruit him. He was about to lose his job when he could not convince a woman he had been working on to work for the CIA. This was a dangerous job, and she did not want to take the risk. On what was to be their last dinner together, Lawler remembered the importance of connection in sales, and he realized that recruiting this woman was essentially him trying to sell her something. He began to open

up to her and tell her about his own struggles. He had already stopped selling because he already thought she had made up her mind. As such, this was not manipulation. He was merely trying to make a meaningful connection with this woman. In the end, however, the woman did decide to work with the CIA because of this conversation she had with Lawler. When the woman later tried to explain why she changed her mind, she said it was because she felt safe with Lawler. They were able to relate to one another because he allowed himself to be vulnerable with her and share himself with her.

Duhigg uses this story to describe how every conversation is actually one of three conversations which answers a particular question.

1. "What's this about?"
2. "How do we feel?"
3. "Who are we?"

Supercommunicators are able to determine which conversation they are a part of and respond accordingly. It is when the different participants in a conversation do not understand what the other party wants out of a conversation that true connection is most lacking. In "what's this about" conversations, communicators have a "decision-making mindset." These are practical conversations that require choices. "How do we feel" conversations employ an emotional mindset, and participants are looking both for empathy and to share emotions rather than to solve a problem. In a "who are we" conversation, participants have a social mindset. This type of conversation "emerges when we discuss our relationships, how we are seen by others and see ourselves, and our social identities." When two communication partners fail to have the same type of conversation, miscommunication occurs. Duhigg states that this is the essence of the matching principle: namely that people notice the type of conversation the other party is looking to engage in and then match it themself, focusing on emotion in emotional conversations and practical matters in "what's this about" conversations.

What's This About Conversations

Charles Duhigg then asks his reader to think about the last conversation they had. He asks them to consider how they knew the topic of the conversation as well as how they deciphered the tone. He says that it is unlikely these considerations were specifically laid out beforehand. Instead, he says that researchers have determined that conversations contain "a delicate, almost subconscious dance that usually occurs as discussions start. This back-and-forth emerges via our tone of voice, how we hold our bodies, our asides and sighs and laughs. But until we arrive at a consensus on how a dialogue ought to proceed, the real conversation can't begin." He says this negotiation takes place through experimentation where parties determine what topics will be discussed and send signals through tone, expressions, and reactions.

To exemplify this negotiation, Duhigg discusses a surgeon who had difficulty convincing his patients with prostate cancer to take the more conservative approach to treatment that he and the medical community as a whole felt was most prudent. Many of his patients wanted to immediately move towards aggressive treatments. This surgeon came to understand that his recommendations were not being taken seriously because he was not meeting his patients where they were at. He was not discussing what it is that they wanted and needed to discuss. When he started to truly probe into what it was his patients really wanted and needed to talk about, surgeries he thought best not to perform went down by 30%. To recognize and effectively manage the negotiation that occurs in all conversations, supercommunicators, first realize a negotiation is taking place, second determine what everyone wants from the conversation, and then help figure out how to make that happen. When the surgeon's patients needed to discuss how their cancer diagnosis affected their families, the surgeon in the example was able to meet them where they were at and help his patients get the most out of the conversation.

How Do We Feel Conversations

Duhigg believes that all conversations are, in part, about emotions. Because of this, listening well becomes a crucial component of successful conversations. One way to effective listening is through asking effective questions. These questions do not focus so much on the facts but rather on the way the conversational partner feels about the facts. He explains how psychology experts used to hold the view that it is important to read the situation through the perspective of the other person in a conversation. Psychology professor Nicholas Epley now believes that this is actually impossible because we cannot see the world through another person's eyes. This causes a failure in listening when it causes the listener to assume that they know how the other person feels when, in reality, they do not. This causes a missed connection. Instead, it is more worthwhile to ask questions and have the other person tell you how they feel instead of simply assuming what their feelings are. This discussion about feelings can help the listener understand what the other person is really about.

Duhigg moves on to discuss emotional contagion, the process by which people synchronize emotions with those around them. This emotional contagion is sometimes conscious but is often subconscious. Some people tend to shy away from exposing their vulnerability, but Duhigg believes this is a misstep because it is when people are most vulnerable that they are most open to this social contagion and the synchronization of emotions. It is a cycle in which vulnerability leads to emotional contagion which then in turn fosters connection and prompts question asking. These questions then create vulnerability and the cycle continues.

With regards to the matching principle, Charles Duhigg turns to laughter because laughter is an important conversational component. What researchers have discovered is that simply mirroring the laughter of another is not enough. "What matters isn't speaking and acting alike, but rather matching one another in ways that convey the desire to align." Laughter helps foster connection, but people can determine when the other person's laughter is not real. People can also feel uncomfortable if their level of laughter does not match that of the other person. Duhigg writes, "A joke might not be funny, but if we both agree to laugh in similar ways, we're signaling to the other that we want to connect."

> *Laughter helps foster connection, but people can determine when the other person's laughter is not real.*

The matching principle also applies to mood and tone. A mood can be either positive or negative, and energy can either be high or low. Evaluating a person's mood and energy can often help a person determine how another person feels. Often these two factors, mood and energy, can be communicated nonverbally, and our brain can often pick up on these very quickly, allowing us to align ourselves with the other person if need be. He writes, "When people were not connecting with each other – when one person was laughing and the other merely playing along – you could tell because, even if they sounded similar, their mood and energy levels didn't match." Emotional intelligence is demonstrated through both the recognition and the matching of the other person's mood and energy. Supercommunicators are especially good at recognizing these nonverbal clues.

Duhigg turns next to contentious issues, both political and personal, as he discusses the great polarization that exists at this moment in history. He says that it is likely his readers have had at least one difficult conversation recently, and he explains how usually these issues are not calm back and forth discussions but rather usually involve "bruised feelings, anger, defensiveness, and misunderstandings galore." He explains how Sheila Heen, a Harvard Law professor, learned throughout her life that the goal of contentious conversations is not to win an argument but rather to figure out why there is a problem in the first place. In order to come to peaceful conclusions, conflicting parties must look at why the disagreement is taking place and also look at the stories they are telling themselves about the disagreement. Then, they need to be able to find areas where they agree. Part of finding these areas of mutual agreement is to realize that there are usually two conflicts: the surface conflict and the underlying emotional conflict. It is the underlying emotional argument that contains "so much of the anger and disappointment driving this argument beyond the possibility of compromise."

People must understand these emotions if compromise is to be possible, and this requires a "how do we feel" conversation. It becomes easier for people to express their feelings if they believe the other person is listening, and this can be done through a technique called looping for understanding. This occurs when a person listens to another, repeats back in their own words what the other person said, and then asks if they got it correct. They continue this process until the other person is satisfied that they have been understood. Even very different people can understand each other because they often have many shared emotional experiences. The looping for understanding tool is a powerful technique for building trust and in figuring out what stories the other person is telling themselves and what emotions are guiding their ideas.

Who Are We Conversations

Duhigg turns then to "who are we" conversations, and to exemplify these conversations, he tells the story of Dr. Jay Rosenbloom. At the beginning of his career in medicine, Rosenbloom spent a lot of time doing well-check appointments for children. At the end of the appointments, he would be tasked with providing immunizations for children. What he thought would be a routine procedure was more difficult than he imagined because parents were at times hesitant to allow their children to have these immunizations. Rosenbloom tried many different techniques over the years to try to combat these anti-vaccination arguments, but he never found anything that was very successful. Researchers eventually came to the conclusion that parents' decisions to avoid vaccination are often a product of their social identities, and this is part of the reason medical professionals find it so difficult to change parents' minds. In short, anti-vaxxers are hesitant to change their perspectives regardless of the information healthcare professionals provide them with because it would require them to turn their back on these social identities.

Rosenbloom looked back to his own mentor and considered that man's idea that the person in the white coat knows better than the patient what is best for the patient. This made Rosenbloom understand that in order for physicians to better accommodate those who opted out of vaccination, he would have to focus on two key points. The first is the preconception he had in his own head about the ignorance of anti-vaxxers. The second is that he would have to learn how to make patients feel respected if patients were going to be expected to act against the norms of their social groups.

Our social identity refers to "how society sees us and how we see ourselves as social creatures." While these social identities come from different experiences in our lives, they revolve around our group membership as well as how much we value that group membership. These social identities have long-ranging impacts. To exemplify this, he refers to a study done in 1954 in which boys at a summer camp were divided into two different groups. The groups the boys were assigned to were random, but just being placed in the group facilitated both the bonding with other members of the group and the demonization of members of the other group. It is likely that these social impulses are rooted in evolution because banding together would have been necessary for the human species to survive and grow into what it is today. After all, it is this social instinct that is responsible for the most fundamental behaviors of human beings such as a mother's desire to feed her baby.

Not all social identities are equal, however. For example, a person might feel less of an affiliation with a fan of a sports team

they also root for and with whom they would generally find a social affiliation if they found out the other person is an assault rifle extremist. "Social identities become more and less powerful – or more and less salient – as our surroundings change." To explain this, Duhigg states that someone likely will not feel a strong affiliation with another by wearing a Barack Obama t-shirt in an environment where everyone else voted for Obama, but if they see someone wearing an Obama t-shirt at a Republican march, and they voted for Obama, they may feel more of a connection with the other person. In this way, the importance of our identities is influenced by the environments we are in.

The beliefs people have about their social identities can be powerful and can affect their performance through something called stereotype threat. This occurs when a person knows a negative stereotype exists about members of a group the person belongs to and their performance is negatively affected because of this. An example of this is when women do worse on math exams than men do solely because of the negative stereotype they understand exists around women in mathematics. Stereotypes can harm people, then, even if no one around them is prejudiced in this manner. The mere fact that a person knows a stereotype exists is enough to bring down their performance. Experimenters were able to overcome this stereotype, at least in the controlled environment of a study, by telling test takers that the questions were chosen to "sidestep perceived gender differences." In another study, researchers determined that when they asked female math test takers to examine all their various identities, rather than just their female identity, they performed as well as men on the tests.

Rosenbloom was able to use such ideas to help his patients who did not want vaccines. When his patients entered the room, he began to talk with them about what they have in common, finding a common identity. This requires a "who are we" conversation that happens when we ask people to talk about their backgrounds, communities, and how they see themselves while refraining from pigeon-holding people into one identity only.

Some of the most difficult conversations people have revolve around issues of identity and group membership. Duhigg explains how often irritation and ire arise as a person is either placed in a group they do not want to be in or are denied access into a group they do want to be in. This makes people feel like their identity is threatened in a conversation, leading to real physiological changes related to stress in the person's body. Identity threats can then lead people to become defensive and engage in counterattacks. Duhigg states that "conversations about who we are – and who we want to be – are essential if we hope society will change." To overcome the pitfalls of these difficult conversations, participants ought to prepare for the conversations by considering what they will say as well as the obstacles they will encounter while being careful to avoid generalizations. These are good considerations for any conversations.

Duhigg notices the importance of conversation. These conversations are personal, political, professional, and political. He explains what is at the heart of these different conversations people engage in and what psychological and sociological principles are at play. By helping his readers better understand the types of conversations they are engaging in, he also helps them navigate the pitfalls they may face and provides them with concrete principles to consider when communicating with others. His readers come away from his book with a better understanding of what is happening around them as well as a better understanding of how to communicate better on every level with the people around them.

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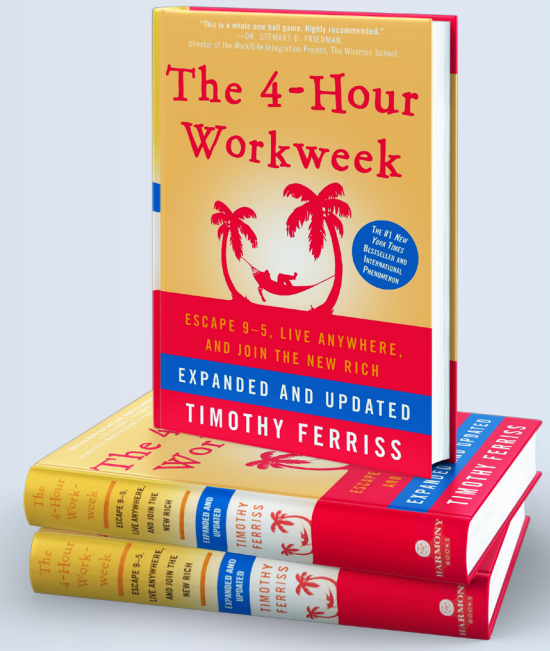
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The 4-Hour Workweek

Timothy Ferriss

BOOK SNAPS™

Zooming In On Your Next Read



The 4-Hour Workweek

by Timothy Ferriss

Tim Ferriss has been listed as one of *Fast Company*'s "Most Innovative Business People" and one of *Fortune*'s "40 under 40." He is an early-stage technology investor/advisor (Uber, Facebook, Shopify, Duolingo, Alibaba, and 50+ others) and the author of five #1 *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* bestsellers, including *The 4-Hour Workweek, The 4-Hour Body, The 4-Hour Chef,* and *Tools of Titans*. The *Observer* and other media have called Tim "the Oprah of audio" due to the influence of The Tim Ferriss Show podcast, which is the first business/interview podcast to exceed 100 million downloads and has now exceeded 400 million downloads. *fourhourblog.com*

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No Need to Delay, Live Large Now

The 4-Hour Workweek: Escape 9-5, Live Anywhere, and Join the New Rich by Timothy Ferriss first hit the *New York Times* bestseller list in 2007 and remained there for two years. It has been published in 35 languages and sparked a worldwide movement in "lifestyle design." If you yearn to work less and live life now, rather than deferring it to retirement, *The 4-Hour Workweek* can show you how.

Is Lifestyle Design for You?

Tim Ferriss helps readers discover if this way of life is for them by addressing some of the "common doubts and fears that people have" before taking the leap into lifestyle design. He assures doubters that they do not have to quit their jobs, take big risks, or be a single twenty-year-old to become Newly Rich. He asserts that this lifestyle is for anyone who has a desire to start living life to the fullest now rather than take the traditional "deferred-life plan" inherent to working long, hard hours into the so-called Golden Years. These people create the lifestyle they want now, not later, using the currencies of time and mobility.

You don't have to be someone who wants to travel because travel is not a necessary to this lifestyle; it is merely an option. You also don't have to be a member of a privileged group, born rich or an Ivy Leaguer. Ferriss claims that anyone can work less than four hours a week and make more money per month than they used to make in a year, just like he does, by following "an uncommon set of rules." This book is all about how you can become a part of a "quiet subculture called the New Rich" by implementing "an art and science referred to as "Lifestyle Design."

DEAL: The Process Used in Becoming a Member of the New Rich

Ferriss teaches readers the steps to radically increase income while cutting work hours significantly, using the acronym DEAL.

- **D for Definition:** Explains the overall recipe for Lifestyle Design, including key ideas, rules, and objectives.
- **E for Elimination:** Discusses how to completely change your notion of time management.

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- **A for Automation:** Teaches how to use specific tools to increase income.
- **L for Liberation:** Shows how you can free yourself from being tied to a single location.

Step 1: D is for Definition

The New Rich have goals and philosophies that differ from the majority. With just a slight differentiation in wording, Ferris reveals the stark contrast between the groups: New Rich and Deferred. For example, Deferreds want to work for themselves. The New Rich want to have other people work for them. Deferreds want to buy everything they ever wanted. The New Rich want to experience all the things they can dream up. Deferreds want to retire early. The New Rich want to have mini-retirements throughout life, instead of a long period of inactivity at the end.

One of the first tenets of Lifestyle Design is leveraging choice to use and maximize your money to get the experiences you desire. Ferriss explains that there is a difference between being an actual millionaire and living like one. The latter is attainable, even with modest financial wealth. He writes, "Money is multiplied in practical value depending on the number of W's you control in your life: what you do, when you do it, where you do it, and with whom you do it." He calls this the "freedom multiplier." Someone earning $500,000 annually working 80 hours per week is, by this definition, less free and "powerful" than someone who works only 20 hours a week to earn $40,000. It's all about what you do with the time and money you have. People have more options than they realize to make more money working less, such as:

- Negotiating a remote work agreement that allows someone to get the required work done in a small fraction of the time, thus having more time for other things.
- Choosing which customers to work with as a business owner and getting rid of those that take the most time for the least profit.
- Outsourcing all operations of a business while working from locations around the world for mere hours per week.

Ferriss says all of this is possible. The first step, no matter the option you choose, is to remove the assumptions you have about time and work. You have to challenge the status quo in order to evolve. A new lexicon must be learned, you must change your direction completely, and accept a new set of rules. The New Rich follow a set of rules that are uniform amongst that group, but very different from what the rest of the world does. Key differentiators include:

1. Retirement should not be the goal. Retirement planning should be viewed as insurance; protection from the "absolute worst-case scenario."

2. People's interest in something and energy levels are cyclical. "Alternating periods of activity and rest is necessary to thrive, much less survive." Mini-retirements distributed throughout life keep life more enjoyable and work more productive.

3. American culture tends to reward sacrifice over productivity. Spending fewer hours to achieve greater results is not laziness. It is actually far more meaningful.

4. Forget trying to achieve your dreams "when the time's right" or you will never achieve them. "Someday is a disease that will take your dreams to the grave with you."

5. Instead of asking for permission to do something, ask for forgiveness. Do the thing you want and find a way to justify it. The exception is doing something that will be devastating to the people in your life.

6. Focus on the things that you are good at rather than attempting to fix your weaknesses.

7. Too much of anything, be it time or possessions, can have the opposite effect on life than intended. Too much free time is "poisonous" while the positive use of it is productive.

8. Money is not the answer to all problems. Of course, money is powerful and necessary but the simple attainment of more of it is not the solution to fulfillment.

9. Income should be viewed relatively, or how you can use it, rather than absolutely, how much of it you have. Relative income uses dollars and time, not just dollars.

10. There are two types of stress: distress and eustress. Distress is harmful and destructive. Eustress comes from the root Eu-, meaning "healthy." You experience it when pushed to break through limits. The New Rich actively remove distress and find eustress.

Step 2: E is for Elimination

A critical step to Lifestyle Design is changing your understanding of time management. Ferriss says that most people try to fill all of the time with a "work fidget of some type." He says that busyness is often the goal for those that want to move up the corporate ladder. However, eliminating tasks and freeing up your time is a key component to becoming a member of the New Rich. Ferriss calls this *elimination*. The intention of elimination is to "increase your personal productivity between 100-500%" thereby freeing up your time to pursue the activities that interest you.

As an employee, the goal is to increase your productivity so that you have greater negotiating leverage for things like remote working arrangements and pay raises. You want to make yourself so valuable that the company is willing to grant you more pay and more freedom rather than see you leave. For entrepreneurs, the goal is to decrease the time you spend working while increasing the amount of money you make. How can you accomplish this? By using two approaches that increase productivity.

Firstly, the 80/20 principle is based on Pareto's Law, which says that 80% of all the wealth in a society is held by 20% of the population of that society. Ferriss applies that principle to time management to eliminate busy work that does not produce results. He recommends dissecting your work and home life through the lens of the following two questions:

With the right systems in place, the business automates, and you are free to do what you wish with your time.

- Which 20% of sources are causing 80% of your problems?
- Which 20% of sources are resulting in 80% of your desired outcomes?

Once those sources are identified, eliminate the problem-causers and focus your time on the sources that get the results you seek.

Secondly, Parkinson's Law "dictates that a task will swell in perceived importance and complexity in relation to the time allotted for its completion." Whether you have a month to complete a project or merely 24 hours, the result will be roughly the same. However, given a month, you will spend much more time on the project than you would if you only had 24 hours from the start. Ferriss says that the New Rich use both of these approaches together to "identify the few critical tasks that contribute most to income and schedule them with very short and clear deadlines."

Step 3: A is for Automation

After spending time eliminating fruitless busy work from your life, it is time to automate. The end goal here is to build a system that replaces you. You want to trim any remaining redundancy from your schedule and outsource tasks to virtual assistants and outsourcing companies. There is an expense to this process, naturally. However, freeing up your time to focus on more important things is priceless. Also, Ferriss argues, you will more than make up for the expense in the very near future, both in terms of recaptured time and income generated.

Ferriss asserts that you should get a virtual assistant, even if you don't think you really need one. Why? Having an assistant will help you become comfortable with commanding, rather than being commanded. They can take over tasks that are time-consuming but not directly income-generating. Further, you can maximize working hours by choosing to work with assistants in other time zones, such as in India or China, who perform tasks during their working hours while you are asleep.

Over time and with a carefully constructed scalable system, you can become completely removed from the equation of running your business. With the right systems in place, the business automates, and you are free to do what you wish with your time. The main principles for building this "self-sustaining virtual architecture" include:

- Use outsourcing companies that have groups of trained people that can step in for one another seamlessly to avoid interruptions to your business.
- Allow your outsourcers to communicate with each other and make decisions autonomously within defined criteria, such as a maximum cost.

Step 4: L is for Liberation

The tide is changing. The New Rich refuse to be bound to one place. That is a constraint that will define the future middle class. The New Rich want "unrestricted mobility." This liberation is not just available to entrepreneurs or freelancers, either. Ferriss says that employees can have it too, and in fact, many big companies are offering it. With lower costs and improved productivity, there are plenty of compelling reasons for employers to get on board with remote work. How can you get your company on board? There are two points of leverage: "demonstrate the business benefit of remote working and make it too expensive or excruciating to refuse a request for it."

Employees can set themselves up for permanent remote working by proving themselves and the benefits to their boss on a trial basis first. Documentation of your increased output and performance can then be presented as a case for more opportunities to work remotely. The idea is to make yourself so highly valued by your employer that the company cannot do without you. If they refuse your request when you have performed well and made a compelling case, Ferriss says you should move on. Find a company that offers what you want.

The expanded and updated version of *The 4-Hour Workweek* was published just two years after the original in 2009. It differs from the first edition in a variety of ways, but most importantly it was written to reflect a very different economic landscape than the one that existed during the original's publication. The revised edition hit shelves during the Great Recession that started in 2008. Questions that Tim Ferriss posed in pre-crash lectures were suddenly no longer hypothetical. People were facing retirement account wipeouts, currency devaluations, and income loss in staggering proportions. "How would your priorities change if you could never retire?" "When everything and everyone is failing, what is the cost of a little experimentation outside of the norm?"

Ferriss encourages readers to "see the infinite possibilities outside of your comfort zone. This period of collective panic is your big chance to dabble." Think differently about your future with a focus on lifestyle design—rather than retirement planning—and have the luxury of navigating market fluctuations that you cannot control.

The currencies of time and mobility are the new gold. Ferriss's process teaches readers how to exchange "9-to-5 drudgery" and "keep-it-short-or-get-fired vacations" for a life of mini-retirements and rewards usually reserved for end-of-life retirement. Today, this message is just as meaningful and relevant.

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The Job Seeker's Script

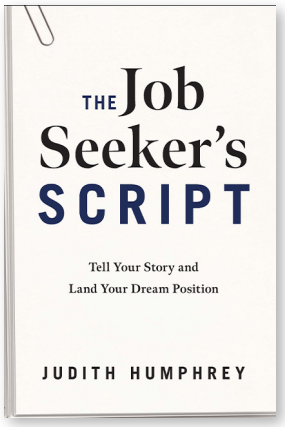
Judith Humphrey

Career

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The Job Seeker's Script

Tell Your Story and Land Your Dream Position



by **Judith Humphrey**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

As a successful communication coach, author Judith Humphrey began teaching the same scripting techniques that she'd been teaching her executive clients to young people and senior level job candidates in preparation for their interviews. Their success rate was 100% and she was thrilled that this coaching led to amazing careers for job seekers. Her own career had in fact been built on the strength of scriptwriting and her desire to write this book emerged from a long-time belief in the power of a persuasive script.

Scripting yourself can be your superpower! These turbulent, challenging times in the job market demand a book like this. There are more individuals competing for positions and, at the same time, companies have become more demanding. Telling your story in a compelling way is the key to landing that coveted job. In ***The Job Seeker's Script: Tell Your Story and Land Your Dream Position,*** Humphrey will show you how to create a winning narrative for each stage in your job search. This book will give you a new set of skills that will set you apart. The ability to present your narrative clearly and forcefully will serve you well in your job search and throughout your career.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to become a scriptwriter to tell your story.
- The method for writing conversational scripts.
- How to execute killer written scripts to get interviews.
- The best way to handle interviews and land your dream job.

Part I: You Are the Scriptwriter: Telling Your Story

Whether you're on the job market for the first time and looking to launch your career, or you are a seasoned professional, telling your story is essential for landing the job you want. Part I will break down exactly how to write, develop, and tell that story.

Deciding on Your Story Line

If you want to land that next job, you must know where you're going. Here are six essential questions to ask yourself to help decide the direction you wish to pursue.

The Six Questions to Ask Yourself

1. Am I prepared to invest in myself? A successful job search requires significant time and effort that not everyone is willing to carve out.
2. What are my skills and interests? Be realistic in what you can honestly say are your skill strengths. If you have your eye on a job category, but you're missing a necessary skill, take some training.
3. Do I want a new direction? Cherish your strengths, but know when to pivot your finely tuned skills into another role that builds upon these strengths.
4. What kind of culture do I want to work in? Explore what the corporate leadership is like, the atmosphere, if the company values fit with yours, and where and when work gets done.
5. What size company do I want to work in? Like Goldilocks, you want a company that is not too large, not too small, but just right–for you.
6. Will I be able to succeed there? Find out about opportunities for advancement, salaries for different positions, tenure of employees, and the career trajectory of the leadership team to see if they've been promoted from within.

Once you've addressed these six questions, you'll have a well-defined set of goals that you'll use to craft a mission statement for your career. This is a statement you make *to yourself* to describe your goals and be the first cut message you'll deliver to others in your job search. It will serve as a filter to decide which positions to pursue and which to pass on.

Developing Your Character

You are the main character in this story and you'll need to portray yourself so others connect with you and see you as a deserving candidate. To land the job, you'll need to bring forward those qualities that allow you to shine in every conversation, every interview, every resume and cover letter, and every job you want to win. There are nine qualities that will allow you to script yourself for success.

1. **Authenticity:** Show what makes you unique, what is special about you, and what drives you.
2. **Positivity:** Write and speak enthusiastically about your career aspirations and the company you are interviewing with, using language that shows your upbeat attitude.
3. **Passion:** Talk about your passion to build your career, to contribute to the world, to excel in the job you are applying for–and use words that convey passion and deep interest.
4. **Confidence:** Express confidence in your language and speaking style, using active verbs that show what you created, built, accomplished, or implemented.
5. **Impact:** Communicate the impact you had as well as your ability to problem solve, using quantifiable results whenever possible.
6. **Resilience:** Show you can rebound from challenging circumstances and help others do so, too.
7. **Humility:** Emphasize your accomplishments, but don't boast. Humility means being so sure *of yourself* that you don't have to call undue attention *to yourself* and it impresses.
8. **Respect:** Use simple courtesies, keep your commitments, and do research in advance of meeting anyone.
9. **Gratitude:** We humans crave appreciation, and showing gratitude will make you more appealing to those who hire and make *you* feel happier.

As you craft your scripts for each stage in your job search, think about these nine characteristics that will enable you to make a strong impression.

What's Your Message?

Every good story has a consistent point of view, and so should yours. You need a message that will deliver a clear idea of who you are, what you want, and why someone

You want everyone to know that one big thing about you that will captivate them. A clear, strong message is your superpower.

should hire you. You need to be telling your story, and at the heart of a good story is a message that will get across your value.

There are two reasons for having a message that inspires. First, it will ground you and give you confidence. A one-sentence message will center you on the one thing that makes you exceptional and right for the jobs you are seeking and knowing it will give you inner strength. Secondly, it will be the key idea you can deliver to everyone you meet. You want everyone to know that one big thing about you that will captivate them. A clear, strong message is your superpower.

Script Yourself with HIRE

One of the biggest mistakes job seekers make is not preparing what they'll say. But without a script you risk sounding unfocused. The unscripted job candidate may ramble on, jumping from one idea to another, without the coherence or focus that drives home a point. The secret to creating scripts that deliver strong, clear, persuasive messages is the HIRE template.

Here is the four-part HIRE template for structuring all of your scripts:

Hook–with a grabber

Inspire–with your message

Reinforce–with proof points

Engage–with a call to action

Hook: A hook reaches out to your audience. It can be thought of as a grabber or a verbal handshake. It captures the attention of your listener and builds a bridge to that person. This could be a simple, "Thank you for taking time to meet with me," or "I'm so glad to have this opportunity. Let me tell you about my career success."

Inspire: This is your compelling message, the one point you want to make. It's your why. It could be, "This position is the ideal next step in my career with this company," or "I'm excited about the seasoned leadership I'd bring to this role."

Reinforce: Reinforce your message with proof points that are numbered. Here are three patterns to choose from.

The first is chronological. If your message is that you deliver strong results, you would share three points that clearly show the results you achieved over time in your career.

A second way is to share reasons that reinforce your message. For example, if your message is about your passion for marketing, your proof points would be reasons you say that, such as, "I really "get" marketing," or "I'm a big believer in market research."

A third approach is to have two proof points: one that describes a *situation* and the other describing a *response* to that situation.

Engage: Use a call to action that suggests next steps. In an interview, you might say, "I am excited about this opportunity and feel I'm worthy to take on the assignment." In a networking conversation, your close may be asking for a meeting or requesting that person send your resume to the hiring manager.

The HIRE template is your secret weapon for telling your story and landing that job. Nobody will know you're using it, but you'll sound and be inspiring when you do.

Rehearse, Rehearse, Rehearse

To succeed in your job journey, you'll need to deliver your scripts with clarity and confidence. You'll want to bring energy and enthusiasm to your performance. Don't wait until the interview to learn your lines. Write out what you want to say, and then practice those lines, with the following guidelines in mind.

Be "In" the Script: What you say must reflect the story of who you are and what you believe you can offer. Make sure everything reflects your strong beliefs about yourself and what you are capable of.

The Silent Rehearsal: Next, you need to internalize the script. Find a quiet place and mentally review the script. Run through the entire script in silence, and deliver it to

yourself until you can do so without looking at the paper. Learn the flow and key points rather than memorizing.

For the Big Events, Rehearse Out Loud: When you have an important meeting with an influencer, recruiter, or hiring executive, it's best to rehearse out loud. Practice delivering it in front of a coach, friend, or family member. Record yourself so you can review your delivery.

Interviewing for a new job can be stressful. But remember that in each encounter, you're learning about the company just as they are finding out about you. Do your best to prepare–but also make sure you find the organization that's the best fit for you.

Part II: Conversational Scripts

As a job seeker, your journey often begins with the informal conversations you have with colleagues, networking contacts, mentors, sponsors, and bosses. Part II will help you develop an elevator pitch that captures your listener's attention, how to script yourself for successful networking encounters, and how to promote yourself to the right people when you want to rise within your present company. These are all informal but critical conversations.

Crafting Your Elevator Pitch

An elevator pitch allows you to get your point across in brief encounters, which can be make-or-break situations for job seekers.You will use it with planned and unplanned situations, such as chance run-ins or when talking to recruiters.

This kind of script will focus your thinking, demonstrate your value, and save you from delivering messages about yourself that are too general or scattered. It should be about 30 seconds in length but has all the same HIRE elements as a longer talk. Once you've created this brief talk, you're ready to practice and deliver it.

Nailing the Networking Conversations

Networking is all about asking others for help and doing so is a smart move when you're looking for a job. Don't be shy about asking for help. But seeking support–especially from someone in a position of power–can be scary.

Creating your network is a crucial first step. Don't wait until you are desperate for a new position. Expand your circle now. Every career conversation you have with someone you know or meet, particularly with someone who is able to help you, will reap returns when you are ready to make your move. Make connections with colleagues, friends, executives, HR professionals, industry influencers, and family members.

Once you've expanded your network, prepare an inspiring pitch for those you wish to approach. Prepare a customized script for each encounter or each ask. Write it out, learn it, rehearse it, and make it flawless. Don't go to a meeting or leave a voicemail until you have crafted a script using the HIRE template.

Pitching Yourself Inside Your Company

Your dream job just might be waiting for you in your present company. There are many opportunities for advancement or lateral moves because it's a win-win. While the grass may look greener on the other side of the job fence, those who like their present company should consider advancing their career while staying with the current employer. It's definitely worth your while to have that conversation. You can seize opportunities by approaching the right people and creating a strong script.

The first and crucial first step in getting promoted within your firm is building a network of people who can help you. Many companies have tools that help with this networking. If your company has such a platform, use it to find the positions and people that will lead to your next opportunity. Also seek out individuals who can help you advance, beginning with your boss.

Once you've developed a network of senior-level influencers, get ready to meet with and ask those individuals for assistance with a HIRE script. You will need to prepare different scripts when talking to your boss, pitching a sponsor or mentor, or speaking to a hiring manager.

Part III: Written Scripts

In addition to conversational scripts, you also have to tell your story in written documents, specifically in your resume, cover letter, and thank-you notes. Part III will show you how to create standout documents that communicate your strengths, your readiness for the role, and your enthusiasm for the position.

A Winning Resume

Your resume plays a major role in your success. Contrary to popular belief, those who read resumes do give them more than a passing glance. These readers are looking for your story–your narrative. For that reason, there must be a thread running through your resume that moves the reader

Ask yourself, "What's the one compelling idea I want to get across about myself?"

to believe in you, to choose you as a candidate worthy of an interview, and indeed a job.

Although design elements and the role of the Applicant Tracking System (ATS) are important, the more critical dimension is the deeper structure of your resume. This is the set of interlocking arguments that tell your story and persuade the reader that you are an ideal candidate.

To truly make your case, you need to use the HIRE template to write a "resume script," using the following steps.

Step 1: Craft Contact Information to Grab Your Reader

This is the first thing a recruiter will look at and it is your verbal handshake so make it appealing. Make it strong and clear, including first and last name, phone number, email and LinkedIn address, and a link to your website or portfolio.

Step 2: Create an Inspiring Summary Statement

Make sure this message is clear and forceful. Ask yourself, "What's the one compelling idea I want to get across about myself?" Ideally, it is *one sentence and only one sentence.* Choose active verbs over nouns like *built, earned, exceeded, delivered, increased, and transformed*.

Step 3: Reinforce Your Message with a Set of Supporting Points

These are the points you will include in your "Professional Experience" section and they should line up with and support your summary statement. List the companies you've worked for in reverse chronological order including location, titles, and the years you held them. Provide a one-sentence message for each job just below the job title.

Step 4: Create a Set of Bullet Points Under Each Job Statement

Reinforce each job statement with a set of bulleted points. Anywhere from two to four bullets is a good rule of thumb. Provide hard facts about what you've accomplished, using dollar amounts, percentage increases, number of people reached, and bottom-line results.

Step 5: Add Other Sections

To finish, add short sections for education, certificates, or skills.

Step 6: Make Sure You Have the Important Key Words

For many jobs, the first cut is made by a computer. ATS software scans your resume for key words to make sure the fit is a good one. If you can pick some of the language of the job posting–without overdoing such repetition–you'll help yourself.

Step 7: Do a Final Edit

Before you submit your resume, give it a final edit.

A Killer Cover Letter

Recruiters and hiring managers are busy people! Your cover letter needs to be a single page–typically three short paragraphs–that are gracious, clear, compelling, and well structured. And whether they ask for one or not, you should alway include a cover letter because it allows you to say a lot about yourself–who you are, what kind of personality you have, and why you are excited about this job opportunity.

There are four qualities to a winning cover letter, which should be incorporated into the HIRE template you will use to structure your cover letter script. Your cover letter should:

1. Show your passion for your work and for the advertised position
2. Be customized specifically for the position
3. Use natural, conversational language and be free from jargon
4. Be flawless in terms of spelling, grammar, and presentation

To apply the HIRE template, structure your cover letter in the following way:

H-Hook with the opening sentence.

I-Inspire with the second sentence, which is your message we have previously discussed.

R-Reinforce with the second paragraph with proof points tied to your message.

E-Engage with your third paragraph, which will restate your interest and outline the next step you'd like them to take.

How to Say Thank You

A career conversation shouldn't end when you leave the room. You want to be in the good graces of those who assist you. If someone has given you their time or advice, they deserve to hear back from you. Expressing your gratitude is an act of politeness and indicates good character. It reinforces ties with those who helped you and makes it likely they will assist you in the future. The gold standard to follow up with your thanks is with a handwritten note or card. Such notes speak volumes.

Part IV: Interview Scripts

For most job seekers, the crucial make-or-break moments come with the interview or string of interviews. Part IV will show you how to succeed in these high-stakes encounters by preparing intensely, creating a winning interview script, mastering Q&A, and making your interview a standout performance.

Rock Your Research

Knowledge is power. Prepare for that crucial meeting by deepening your knowledge in four areas: the company, the culture, the interviewer, and the job. Your research will make you come across as savvy and well prepared. And your exploration of those topics will enable you to ask good probing questions that will help you gain insights needed to make the right decision about whether you want to accept an offer.

Crafting an Interview Script

An interview script will enable you to tell your story, know what you want to say about yourself, and have a set of arguments about your readiness for the role. It will enable you to sound clear-headed and help you avoid an all-too-common situation of job seekers who adopt a reactive mode, responding to questions but not leading the discussion in any way. The key to acing the interview is to create a script using the HIRE template, which you can apply to different types of interview scripts.

Word-for-Word: Write out the main elements of your script in full sentences.

Bullet-Point: Organized around sound bites you can elaborate on in the interview.

PowerPoint: Present a PowerPoint deck at your interview and blow the interviewer away.

Demo: Demonstrate your skills in the area you are applying for, showing how you'd pitch a client in a sales job interview, for example.

Video: Send a video in advance of the interview to make a strong case for yourself as a candidate.

Whichever script you use, the key is to plan it all out with the HIRE template. Preparing in advance will provide you with direction and purpose that will enable you to exude confidence.

Preparing for Q&A

You may have the best credentials in the world, but if you can't talk about them intelligently and confidently, your interviewer will give you the thumbs down. Answering questions tests a candidate's agility, clarity, and readiness for the role. Before you enter the room, know how to answer the questions you're likely to get.

There are questions that your hiring firm may typically ask. Try to find out what these are and know how to handle answering all types of questions, including quirky curveballs. Find out your answers to 15-20 questions, write them down, and learn them as best you can by studying them in silence, then rehearsing them out loud. Make time to create a list of probing questions to ask the interviewer as well.

Delivering a Standout Performance

You've done all the prep work. You know the qualities you want to project. You've researched the company, its culture, the interviewers, and the job. You've prepared answers to the questions you might be asked and created a set of probing questions yourself. You've written out and rehearsed your interview script. And with it all, you have an amazing story to tell about yourself. Now it's time to deliver a star performance.

Make sure you have the right tech, setting, and dress to present professionally. Use your script, but be real, genuine, and open and project a strong presence. Ask great questions and try to stay strong, even when a curveball gets tossed

your way. Doing this will win over hiring managers and you will have a new set of soft skills that will serve you well in your entire career.

Stay Connected, Stay in Touch

The position you applied for seemed like a perfect fit, you had a great interview process, you followed up with a thank you note and then…nothing, for days or even weeks! That hurts because you feel like you've been ghosted. But a successful job seeker doesn't give up or let the ghost get the better of them. After all, there may be sound reasons for the delay. Stay focused, stay connected, and stay in touch.

The lessons in this book will help you land your dream position and will serve you well in your new role and in your career. You are still the main character in this story you've been crafting–and it's far from over. Don't stop thinking about what your career goals are, how you want to come across, what your message is, who your audience is, and what will make people want to work with you. All of this is part of your story.



Judith Humphrey is a communications expert and the founder and former CEO of The Humphrey Group. This company teaches clients all over the world how to communicate successfully in high-stakes interviews, media events, presentations, and Q&A. She has built her career around coaching professionals at all levels on how to create clear and compelling narratives. In addition to ***The Job Seeker's Script***, Judith has authored three books: ***Speaking as a Leader: How to Lead Every Time You Speak*** (2012); T***aking the Stage: How Women Can Speak Up, Stand Out, and Succeed*** (2014); and **Impromptu: Leading in the Moment** (2017). She also is a regular contributor to Fast Company.

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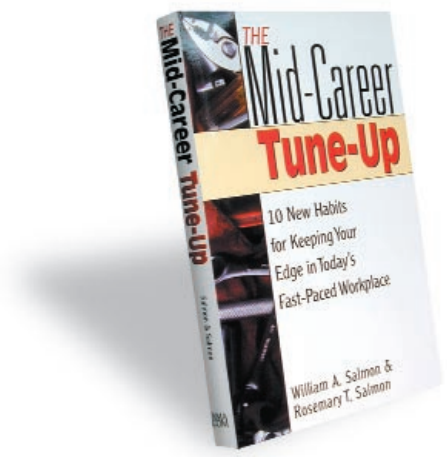
The Mid-Career Tune-Up

William A. Salmon and Rosemary T. Salmon

Vol. 22, No. 1 (3 parts) Part 3, January 2000
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SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®

FILE: SUCCESS/CAREER TECHNIQUES



By William A. Salmon and Rosemary T. Salmon

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Ten Work Habits for Keeping Your Edge

THE MID-CAREER TUNE-UP

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Constant change.
Continuously expanding expectations and pressures.
An increasing need for flexibility.

These are the unrelenting demands faced by today's employees and managers. The source is well documented: As described in countless books, global competition, downsized organizations and empowerment and other shifts in management philosophies have all been dramatically altering the rules of the workplace. For people in mid-career who might have acquired their work habits when the rules were different, these changes mean updating their skills, knowledge and behavior.

This summary offers an overview of 10 new habits required to succeed in today's workplace. In this summary, you will find tips and check lists on:

- ✓ Balancing multiple demands on your time;
- ✓ Sharpening your communication skills;
- ✓ Developing productive relationships with the right people;
- ✓ Resolving conflicts;
- ✓ Solving problems and making decisions;
- ✓ Learning to accept uncertainty and adapt to change.

You will learn, for example, how to identify and disarm common time-wasters and how to spark your creativity by playing with words. You will learn how to use questions effectively when communicating with others and how to identify your "circle of influence" — the people who will help you succeed. You will also learn how to take a problem-centered approach to resolving conflicts. And much more.

The techniques in this summary may be easier to describe than accomplish. You will find, however, that the tips, check lists and step-by-step methods offered in the following pages will help you organize your thoughts, prioritize complex problems and issues, and develop a clear path to improvement and success.

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Do What Your Company Is Paying You To Do

Downsizing, reengineering and other company initiatives over the past few years have put managers and employees into the position of accomplishing more with less — more work, less time, less people. More than ever before, you cannot be successful in today's workplace unless you know how to prioritize your work, manage your time wisely and find the best way to produce the results that your company expects from you.

What's Important?

Start with the big picture. Read your company's mission statement, annual reports and any other information that will help pinpoint your company's overall goals and priorities.

Now, move down and determine how your department fits into those goals. What must the department achieve? The next step is to focus on you and your immediate co-workers. How can you contribute specifically to the company's priorities and goals?

It's important to determine what is critical, urgent and cost-effective about your job. You need to focus your activities so that you are spending time only on activities that contribute to the organization's goals. You cannot succeed in today's workplace by doing the wrong things right.

Suggested Action: Prioritize Your Goals

Set on paper your three or four most important goals for your job, including a complete description of each goal, the person or persons for whom the goal's output is destined, and when the goal must be achieved. The next step is to prioritize these goals. The following four questions will help:

- Which goals are most supportive of your company's mission, purpose and strategic objectives?
- If you could only accomplish two of these goals, which would they be?
- Which of your goals will yield the highest payoff to your company (and then to you)?
- What happens if you don't achieve any of these goals?

Procrastination, personal disorganization, juggling too many priorities and other factors can undermine your work performance. Determining your goals, aligning them with the company's goals and prioritizing them on paper will help you ensure that your valuable time in the workplace is well spent. ■

Balance Demands on Your Time and Resources

Identifying and aligning your goals with the company's strategic objectives helps you determine what you need to achieve. The next step to becoming a valuable employee is to manage your time and resources, which are both often in limited supply in today's workplace, to ensure that those priority tasks and goals are accomplished.

Analyze Your Activities

How well are you spending your time? One quick way to find out is to make a list of your current work activities and estimate (down to minutes) how much time you spend on each activity.

Next, circle the activities that are most important in helping you meet your highest priority goals, and compare how much time you are spending on circled vs. non-circled activities.

Time Wasters

Even with the most careful planning, people seem to waste time during the workday. To help you reduce your wasted time, here are six common time wasters to watch out for:

Poor communication. According to some experts, poor communication — giving incomplete or inaccurate information to someone — is the number one reason for wasted time. Miscommunication requires people to do work over, correct mistakes or make

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The author: The late William A. Salmon was a management consultant, former bank executive and writer. His books include *The New Supervisor's Manual* (Soundview Summary #21-02). Rosemary T. Salmon is a founding partner in Salmon & Salmon Associates.

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Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries (ISSN 0747-2196), 10 LaCrue Avenue, Concordville, PA 19331 USA, a division of Concentrated Knowledge Corporation. Publisher, George Y. Clement. Publications Director, Maureen L. Solon. Editor-in-Chief, Christopher G. Murray. Published monthly. Subscription, $89.50 per year in the United States and Canada; and, by airmail, $95 in Mexico, $139 to all other countries. Periodicals postage paid at Concordville, PA and additional offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to **Soundview, 10 LaCrue Avenue, Concordville, PA 19331.** Copyright © 2000 by Soundview Executive Book Summaries.

Communication Breakdown: The Wasted Report

Maureen S., a purchasing representative for a large medical facility, was asked by her supervisor to do some research on new computer equipment for the department. He needed the information for a meeting with top executives.

Maureen spent 35 hours over the next two weeks reading about different computers and talking to local suppliers. The result: a comprehensive 40-page report comparing the top five computers for the department's specific needs. When she turned in the report, Maureen learned that her supervisor just needed "a few rough estimates about how much we need to budget for our department's computer equipment for the next three years."

Balance Multiple Demands on Your Time and Resources

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major revisions in schedules and priorities in the midst of projects. Make sure you clearly understand or clearly communicate to others the expectations, responsibilities and importance of new projects.

Procrastination. This is not an easy habit to break. Start by trying to understand why you put off certain activities. If the task is unpleasant, remind yourself that you will be relieved when it's taken care of. If the task is complex, break it down into smaller pieces.

Interruptions. Remember your priorities when you are interrupted. If the interruption is more important than your current task, you may have to shift focus. Otherwise, take immediate steps to either resolve the interruption quickly or schedule it for later.

Analysis paralysis. At some point, you need to decide to make a decision and move forward. You may not know what to do next because you have so much to do. In this case, use priority lists to break your paralysis.

Meetings. Many meetings are poorly planned and conducted. Even if you are not the meeting organizer, you can help make meetings more productive by coming prepared and by staying focused on the goals of the meeting.

Clutter. A disorganized work space is also a time waster. One suggestion is to keep all papers in one of four piles labeled "action needed," "completed," "for others" and "undecided." ■

Sharpen Your Communication Skills

Good communication skills have always been important in the workplace. But as managers and employees find themselves working with less time and less resources, avoiding communication glitches is even more vital.

In face-to-face communication, whether you are giving or receiving feedback or information, you can take a number of specific steps to avoid any miscommunication.

When you are giving information, begin by making sure the other person is ready to listen. Also:

- Make a determined effort to be specific and clear.
- Select the right words and tone of voice.
- Validate any information or feedback by using recent examples.
- Check for understanding by asking appropriate questions.
- Summarize the conversation to make sure there is little chance of misinterpretation.
- And finally, seek agreement on what actions need to be taken as a result of the conversation

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Communication Check List

Use the following check list to ensure that you are effectively and efficiently communicating with colleagues and managers.

- ✓ Keep others informed within your work unit and across departmental lines.
- ✓ Provide quick, logical and accurate responses to questions and suggestions.
- ✓ Let your manager know about anticipated problems.
- ✓ Be sure that your written reports require little change and are received on deadline.
- ✓ Be sure your spoken communication is clear and well-organized.
- ✓ Ask for and pay attention to feedback from others.
- ✓ Clarify, verify and restate messages to prevent misunderstandings.
- ✓ Provide timely, accurate and honest feedback to others.
- ✓ Tailor messages tactfully to audiences.
- ✓ Respect others when communicating; don't embarrass them or put them on the defensive.

Sharpen Your Communication Skills

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Receiving Information

When you are asking for information or feedback, start by letting others know that you are open and receptive to what they have to offer you. When the conversation begins:

- Listen carefully, not selectively.
- Ask clarifying questions to make sure you completely understand the message.
- Ask probing questions to make sure you understand any underlying feelings or hidden messages.
- Resist justifying or defending your behavior if the feedback includes constructive criticism.
- Paraphrase or restate to make sure you have interpreted the information correctly.
- Reach agreement with the other person or persons about what actions need to be taken as a result of the conversation.

Asking questions effectively is essential to good communication. Use *closed* (yes or no) questions to establish facts, confirm agreement or clarify understanding. Use *open* answers to expand ideas, seek information and invite participation. Finally, *probing* questions will help you uncover specific details that you may need ("Why do you think that new approach will solve the problem?") or go beyond the surface of the message to uncover the other person's feelings or rationale ("Can you tell me why you are worried about this new procedure?"). ■

Develop Productive Relationships

The ability to build relationships today is no longer limited to getting to know the people who can help you climb the corporate ladder. Customer-driven companies want employees and managers to build closer relationships with their customers. In many organizations, work is built around teams or projects, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and cooperation among employees. Developing productive relationships is vital to your success.

The Circle of Influence

The first step is to determine your "circle of influence." These are the 10 most important people with whom you need to develop a productive relationship.

Start by making a list of all of the people with whom you interact on a regular basis. (Focus on work-related interaction — people on whom you depend to achieve your work goals.) Now pare down this list to the 10 people you absolutely need in order to succeed and flourish, including managers, important co-workers and even potential mentors. Remember co-workers who have "informal power" — power that stems from years of service or special expertise, for example. Also, look beyond your immediate work group, such as individuals in other parts of the company on which you depend, or key people in your profession, industry or marketplace.

Identify the Wrong People

Uncovering the wrong people with whom you spend too much time interacting is often as valuable as identifying the right people with whom you need to build relationships. Are you meeting weekly with a colleague when the same work could be accomplished more quickly by phone? Are certain highly demanding customers monopolizing your time at the expense of other important customers? Know which relationships you want to maintain and nurture — and which relationships have reached levels that are out of proportion to their value.

How to Interact

Once you've identified a circle of influence, the next step is to determine how you should be interacting with them. Time is precious, so be honest. You need to answer two questions:

- How can this person help me be more productive, effective or efficient?
- What information, resources or help can I provide this person to make the relationship beneficial to him or her?

Understanding the work habits and personalities of other people will increase the chances of a good working relationship with them. For example, you should give people who are analytical and detail-oriented timely and precise updates. Conversely, they may be the best people to call on when you need specific facts or figures to support a project. With creative or spontaneous colleagues, you can help each other by brainstorming together on new approaches to persistent problems.

The key is to listen to others, know how they work, what they need and how you can best work together in a mutually beneficial way.

Be a Team Player

The importance of relationship building is emphasized in team-based organizations. Here are some of the techniques that can help you be a better team player:

- Share information with others who will benefit from what you know.
- Compliment others for their hard work.

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Develop Productive Relationships

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- Help streamline work processes. Make sure that you keep things moving smoothly from your work area to the next.
- Share the credit for your success with those who helped you. ■

Resolve Conflicts Rationally

Work in today's organizations often requires greater teamwork and greater collaboration among employees and managers than in the past. Collaboration and cooperation, however, can also lead to differences of opinion. Conflict is an organizational fact of life. To be successful, you must be able to resolve conflicts constructively.

The most effective solution to conflict is to take a rational, problem-centered approach.

Analyze the Situation

The first step to resolving a conflict is to analyze the situation.

Start off by describing the conflict: With whom are you having a problem? What triggered the conflict? Is it getting worse?

Next, review the impact the conflict is having on your ability to achieve your work goals. Are you being hampered by a lack of cooperation with the other person? Are you wasting valuable time working around the problem? Is the conflict leading to increased costs?

Identify any broader impact of the conflict. For example, is the conflict affecting the morale of your work group? Is the conflict affecting the level of service you are providing your customers?

Finally, describe the benefits of resolving the conflict in terms of productivity, efficiency, time and cost savings, and any other relevant factors.

Understanding the impact of the conflict will help you determine which approach you should adopt in resolving the conflict.

The Assertive Approach

You have three options, or approaches, for resolving a conflict.

The first approach is to take an *assertive* stance. You have decided, based on your analysis of the impact of the conflict, that you have a problem that must be resolved. Intent on finding a solution, you decide to schedule a face-to-face meeting with the person with whom you're having the conflict.

Note that assertive does not mean aggressive or confrontational: No solutions will emerge from a shouting match or gripe session. Before you set a time and date, therefore, ensure that the meeting will be constructive and productive. Here's how:

1. Determine the exact words you want to say to start the meeting. The goal is to keep the conversation focused on the issue and its impact, not on personalities or feelings. Be sure that you cover all of the key points you want to make, as in the following example:

> At the beginning of this project, we agreed on certain deadlines. Twice in the last 30 days, however, September 12 and October 8, you have missed deadlines and been at least two days late with your reports. Because of these delays, our department is having trouble meeting its own target dates. Do you have any suggestions about what we can do to help you meet your deadlines?

2. Be prepared to use "I" statements to send a clear message that this is having an impact on you. Say, for example, "I'm sure there's an explanation for these missed deadlines, but I need to know how to prevent further delays."

3. When you are ready to turn the conversation over to the next person, ask a non-threatening question that invites participation. For example: "What do you think about what I've said?" or "How do you think we can resolve this issue?"

Not everybody will appreciate such a straight-on approach. But you will be establishing a reputation as someone who confronts important issues honestly and directly. Both you and the other person will benefit by not allowing a problem to fester and, in the long run, seriously damage any relationship you might have.

Alternate Options

A second option is the *cooperative* approach, in which you passively accept the situation. One reason for such acceptance may be that the issue is not sufficiently important to you to dedicate time and effort toward a resolution. Or you may decide that this is not a battle that you want to fight at this time.

In the second case, you would want to state your position and ensure that the other person agrees with your assessment. You might say, for example, "I know that you and I need to reach an agreement on how to handle this backlog of requisitions, but it's not a real priority for me right now. Do you mind if we put it off for a few weeks?"

A third option is the *collaborative* approach. In this case, the problem needs to be addressed, but you use a combination of the assertive and cooperative approaches. In other words, you're firm about certain issues involved, but are willing to compromise on others. ■

Fix Your Own Problems

More and more companies are pushing problem-solving and decision-making down to the lowest possible levels of the organization. To be successful, you must have the skills to fix your own problems and not wait for someone at a higher level of the organization to tell you what to do. The systematic problem-solving and decision-making process introduced in this article will help you be more accountable, involved and committed to making things work.

Cause and Effect Analysis

To be an effective problem solver, be alert to developing problems. Recognize when things are going wrong and start to ask questions: What is different from the past? How serious is this problem? How frequent is it?

After recognizing that there is a problem, state the problem in a few concise sentences. Focus on the details of the problem; this is the first step toward identifying the problem's causes.

Here are some sample problem statements:

- We have a significant backlog of requisitions, invoices and vendor inquiries. There are more than 100 items that need immediate attention.
- I am spending two extra hours each week writing monthly status reports about our production activities, our safety performance and our overtime schedule.

Next, determine whether this is a problem that needs to be resolved now or later, and also what role you should play in finding a solution. Do you have the required authority to act independently on the problem? If the problem is directly related to your work, you'll want to take a leadership role in finding a solution, but you may need the support of your manager.

Now, start collecting the data you need to identify the problem's cause. One suggestion is to ask questions such as: When did it start? Has it ever gotten better or worse? Look for any trends or patterns that will reveal the causes.

Making Decisions

Every problem-solving activity leads to a decision-making process. You have to list alternative solutions to the problem and decide which solution is the best.

Start with a clear statement of what you want to happen. In this case, you would identify the ideal solution to the problem, including specifics on criteria such as quality of work, costs and time. You would then compare the criteria to the alternative solutions to determine which fulfills your criteria best. ■

Be Creative and Flexible

Certain problems can be resolved through a rational, step-by-step approach as described above. Other problems will require you to be more creative and flexible.

Researchers have identified four building blocks of creativity:

1. Imagination - the willingness to take risks and the determination to let your mind wander wherever it wants.

2. Knowledge - the ability to draw information from experience or to apply expertise.

3. Curiosity - the inquisitiveness that pushes you to explore below the surface for hidden patterns.

4. Persistence - the willingness to overcome frustration and stick with a problem.

Removing Mental Blocks

To be creative, you must remove the psychological or mental barriers that can impede a new idea. There are many common "killer phrases" that will shoot down a potential good idea. Examples include: "It will never work," "It's too risky and too expensive," or "Our customers will never go for this idea."

There are a number of creative problem-solving techniques, such as brainstorming, that will help you and your work group overcome these barriers and unleash your creativity. Here is a sampling of some of them:

1. Reverse thinking. Flip the problem around so that you are looking at it from the opposite perspective. Dr. Edward Jenner studied hundreds of smallpox cases trying to find the cause of the disease. One day, he reversed his thinking and started studying people who did not have the disease. He discovered that dairymaids never contracted smallpox; they were stricken with a milder form of the disease called cowpox, which protected them from smallpox. Jenner used this insight to develop the smallpox vaccine.

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Steps in Creative Problem-Solving

The 19th-century French mathematician Henri Poincaré proposed the following basic steps in creative problem solving:

1. Preparation. You immerse yourself in the problem and collect relevant information.

2. Incubation. Once you've framed the problem and gathered the most pertinent information, clear your mind and let the problem simmer (take a quiet walk or a drive, for example).

3. Illumination. A solution comes to mind (it happens, although most creative people can't say why).

4. Translation. Apply and test the idea.

Be Creative and Flexible

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2. Play with words. Use metaphors, free association or analogies to break out your thinking. One manager, for example, compared resolving a particular complex problem to rolling a heavy stone up a steep hill. He then thought about some "solutions" to his problem, including:

- Asking for help from others to keep the stone rolling in the right direction;
- Looking around the hill for some flat surface to prop the rock up temporarily while he regained strength, assessed where he wanted to go next, or determined whether he needed additional help;
- Finding a natural block, such as a small but strong rock, to use as a wedge to keep the rock from slipping down the hill. The wedge would add a sense of confidence that what has been accomplished so far won't be easily undone.

These solutions were used as analogies to discover or lead to real solutions to his real problem.

3. Use some type of visual to spark your imagination. Studying an unfamiliar photograph of a sad boy in a baseball uniform standing near a field, for example, helped one manager deal with a morale problem in his department. The manager tried to think of the reasons for the boy's sadness. One possible reason: The last game of the season just ended and the boy was sad because this team wouldn't be playing together again. This led him to an insight into the low morale of one co-worker who had just finished a difficult project: His task force team was about to be disbanded. ■

Learn to Accept Uncertainty

No summary about the work skills needed to succeed in today's environment would be complete without a discussion of change. Companies must make significant changes to adapt to today's increased global competition (which requires them to become meaner and leaner) and the shift from a manufacturing to an information economy (which requires new management methods and organizational structures). As a result, you must have the skills to adapt to change and accept uncertainty in the workplace.

Here are some strategies to keep in mind in the face of change:

1. Take personal responsibility for anticipating and preparing for change. Don't cling to the past. Show that you are willing to make change happen.

2. Find out what's happening around you. Stay informed. Keep learning. Keep asking questions.

3. Initiate changes yourself to improve quality, reduce costs or save time. Be part of the solution, not part of the problem.

4. Be professional in everything you do. Show confidence, competence and commitment.

5. Be a positive role model for others. Be upbeat and enthusiastic.

Of course, maintaining an upbeat, professional approach and attitude toward change is easier said then done. One technique that will help you face change and uncertainty is the Force-Field Analysis (see above). ■

Force-Field Analysis

To conduct a force-field analysis, you must list all of the competing forces — the positive "driving" and the negative "restraining" forces — related to a particular change situation. Driving forces are pushing you in the direction of change, restraining forces in the other direction. Here are some of the questions that can help you identify driving forces:

- What has to happen? What does my manager or company expect?
- What factors am I optimistic about in this situation? What possible positive outcomes will I be able to achieve?
- What goals, incentives or opportunities are encouraging me to change?

To identify restraining forces, ask questions such as:

- What must not happen? What is my worst-case scenario?
- What challenges are slowing me down?
- What factors may make the situation worse?

A force-field analysis will reveal the positive side of change and will pinpoint the negative forces that you must address.

Take Responsibility for Your Job Performance

One of the recurrent themes of this summary is that you are responsible for your own job performance. Simply putting in the hours is not enough. Your company or manager is not going to automatically "take care of you"; they will not guarantee your employment or even a motivating work environment. Ensuring your morale, attitude, job satisfaction and performance is up to you.

The other work habits in this summary, from sharpening your communication skills to resolving problems and sparking your creativity, will help improve your work performance and make your job more exciting and challenging

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Take Responsibility for Your Job Performance

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Here are some other tips for improving your performance on the job:

- Focus on a specific goal. Set a challenging short-term goal for yourself. What do you need or want to accomplish?
- Keep track of your own performance. Pay attention to what you're doing well. Don't dwell on errors, but instead try to learn from them.
- Take the time to learn new skills and behaviors. Be optimistic about the value of new techniques or different approaches.
- Set performance standards that exceed the standards expected from your supervisor or company. ■

Priority Goal Assessment

One way to assess your performance is to analyze a specific priority goal based not only on results, but also on the process (how you are achieving the results), your performance qualities and your personal satisfaction.

For example, one manager, Robert S., made a mid-year review of one of his major objectives: delivering to the manufacturing department a prototype of a water processing filter that met the specifications designated in an April 9, 1998, executive memo. The prototype should be provided by September 6, 1999, for testing in December 1999.

His assessment revealed the following:

Results: Despite meetings with production managers from manufacturing, the product specifications had still not been fully defined. Changes continued to be made. One-on-one meetings with several of the managers would be required to finalize specifications and emphasize the tight schedule. A meeting with his department head would also be required to warn him of the changes.

Process: Suggestions and changes from production managers complicated his design work. Robert S. decided he needed to be more assertive with production about his own needs. In the future, he will set some ground rules earlier in the process.

Performance Qualities: Robert S. assumed too easily that people understood his time and budget constraints. He needs to communicate the scope and significance of his objectives more clearly and directly with key people.

Personal Satisfaction: This project requires very hard work and long hours. Robert S. decided that he needed to focus on achieving this project. But once finished, he would reassess his career and personal goals to determine whether it was time to seek out another opportunity.

Manage Your Own Professional Development

Accountability for your job performance also requires you to be accountable for your own professional development. It is up to you to identify the skills, knowledge or competencies you need to perform better in your current job.

Periodic performance reviews and ongoing discussions with your manager about your interests and aspirations can help you identify areas where you need to take action to maintain or improve your current performance.

Professional development is not limited to improving your current job, however. The goal is to prepare for the future, to move toward the most challenging and enjoyable job you can acquire. First, however, you must identify where you want to be and what you want to achieve in your professional career. Ask yourself questions such as:

1. **What do you want your next job to be? Define as many duties and responsibilities as possible.**
2. **If the job you want is different from the job you have, what competencies or skills will you need to acquire for the future? Are they part of your continuous improvement plans?**
3. **How is your current job helping you prepare for the future?**
4. **What are the realistic possibilities of getting the position you want in your current company?**

Pinpointing your specific goals and priorities will help you for the future. You can then determine different ways to get the knowledge, skills or experience you need for future assignments and positions. Formal training, self study, job rotations or joining a project team are just four of the ways you can expand your skills and knowledge. Create an action plan to address your needs and the development areas that you've identified. Staying informed about your company, your industry and your profession is also key.

Employees and managers at any level of any company can achieve their personal and professional goals as long as they take charge of the future. As Ralph Waldo Emerson declared: "There is really no insurmountable barrier save your own inherent weakness of purpose." ■

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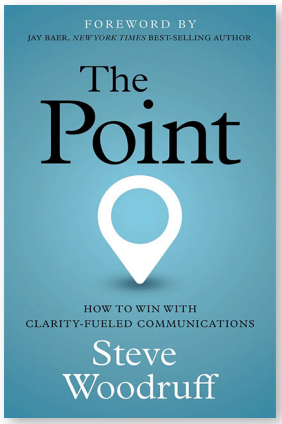
The Point

Steve Woodruff

Executive Book Summaries®

The Point

How to Win with Clarity-Fueled Communications



by **Steve Woodruff**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

In a world where noise and confusion reign supreme, communicating your message is far from easy. The only weapon you'll ever need to rise through this cacophony is absolute clarity.

The book ***The Point: How to Win with Clarity-Fueled Communications*** introduces us to the practice of clarity-fueled communication – where the greatest impact comes from using the fewest possible words. The pages ahead supply you with the tools, insights, and lessons to create brain-friendly messages that truly capture the attention of your audience.

Author Steve Woodruff starts by tackling the greatest communication challenges in our world today. He then helps us build the Clarity Fuel Formula to overcome these challenges and "get to the point." Finally, he lays out value-packed clarity best practices to achieve communication success in every area - From emails and presentations to purpose statements and branding to social media and networking.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to package information in a brain-friendly way.
- How to create your own Clarity Fuel Formula.
- How to use clarity tools to get the message across loud and clear.
- How to apply clarity best practices in all areas of communication.

Introduction

Effective communication is one of the biggest challenges we all face. The purpose of communication isn't just pushing out words; It's really all about achieving an intended result. Our words are tools, and we must use them skillfully to accomplish specific goals. I wrote this book so you can win the most important competition of all: getting your point across and accomplishing your purpose. In every sphere of life. As you begin the journey, here's my promise: by skillfully and consistently applying the simple tactics of the clarity fuel formula, you will become an increasingly effective communicator. And here's my premise: the most direct route to successful communication is to package your messages in what I call "brain-friendly" formats, a skill anyone can learn and apply. But there are barriers to getting our ideas across to others, so let's begin by finding out what is in our way.

Part 1: Our Formidable Communications Challenges

Chapter 1: The Barriers

The three most formidable enemies of effective communication are the gaps, the noise, and the fog. We suffer from many communication barriers:

- Too much information that overwhelms the brain
- Specialized jargon that listeners don't comprehend
- Big generalities that leave room for varying interpretations
- Poorly chosen words that give an unintended meaning
- Divergent communication styles that don't mesh smoothly

You can minimize the misunderstanding gaps by designing your communications with the Clarity Fuel Formula that I'll cover in the book.

The Point: Your biggest competition is not the competition. It's the noise. Your biggest hurdle is everything that is occupying the mind of your audience. You must immediately show your audience why they should care about your message because there's too much else in the focus queue fighting for attention. Fight the noise with immediate relevance.

The Point: Great communicators clear the fog instead of adding to it. They strive for stability, certainty, simplicity, and directness in their works. Their goal? Clear the fog to activate and energize people.

So, how do you clear the fog, rise above the noise, and bridge the gaps? By designing all your communications with your audience in mind. Every human has two unspoken requests: give me the information I want the way I want it and make it easy.

Chapter 2: The Brain

The brain's master filter attends to what is most relevant, so you need to get to the point right away. Your brain is processing about eleven million bits of information every second. Processing and sorting all that nervous system data is the job of a brain structure called the reticular activating system, or RAS.

Here's the secret: the RAS pays attention to things that are new, surprising, interesting, threatening, or specific. RAS is the bouncer at the front door of our consciousness, and it only allows the VIPs (Very Important Priorities) through. Aim your communications arrows directly at the target: the RAS.

The Point: Explaining, not assuming, is what allows us to arrive at shared meaning. Don't assume your audience understands what you're trying to say.

The Point: It's your job to skillfully plant the right ideas in the limited brain space you're allocated. There are "very few" unallocated resources in your audience's mind for what you have to say. This is why less is more when it comes to getting a message across.

Do not overwhelm your audience. Make your message accessible and easy to process. Practice simplicity and be as specific as possible. Do not waste time. Pack as much meaning into as few words as possible. Do not assume: Only offer focused ideas expressed in brain-friendly words. Pay attention to focused clarity in at least four dimensions: clarity of purpose, clarity of direction, clarity of expectations, and clarity of expressions.

Part 2: The Clarity Fuel Formula Rules

Chapter 3: You Shall Have a Point

The Clarity Fuel Formula Rules consist of a four-step process you can follow for all forms of communication: These four logical brain-friendly steps include:

- You Shall Have a Point (Strategize)
- You Shall Get to the Point (Sequence)

Before you begin to compose words, determine the exact purpose and intention of the communication. Why this e-mail, meeting, presentation, or book chapter?

- You shall Get the Point Across (Simplify)
- You Shall Get on the Same Page (Solidify)

This chapter discusses the first step. When you articulate the point, you answer the unspoken questions "Why?" and "Where are we going?"

When communicating with your audience, spell out, in advance, the desired objective of every communication – the point. Think about it with the simple "A-to-B" Shift model:

- The audience (one or many) is thinking, feeling, and acting a certain way right now. That's the status quo: point A
- How do you want your audience to think, feel, and act differently based on your communication? What is the desired specific change? That's point B.

Before you begin to compose words, determine the exact purpose and intention of the communication. Why this e-mail, meeting, presentation, or book chapter? What's the anticipated outcome? People need to know the why, and they need to envision the goal. If you want to move others, you need to make sure they – and you – know what the point is.

Chapter 4: You Shall Get to the Point

Whether you're designing a book, a presentation, a meeting, or an e-mail, the most important thing you can do is to quickly let your audience know why they should tune in. Front-load your message with something striking and relevant that will instantly capture attention. Perhaps after a brief, polite introduction, you can deliver a front-loaded value statement. The human brain needs a smart arrangement to be engaged. For example, here is 1 design sequence I use regularly:

- Attention: take the first few moments to grab those 60 bits of focus
- Relevance: immediately let the RAS know why this interaction matters
- Information: now you've earned the right to share more details
- Action: you should share this if the communication has an anticipated result or call to action, once the engagement is already taking place.
- Put your ideas in a sequential order. Design your message so that it moves from simplicity to complexity. Picture a pyramid with three sections, moving from top to bottom:
- Essence. Get right to a condensed summary of the most salient point. That's the hook. Articulate the simple, distilled essence.
- Outline. Follow with a brief outline, summary, or broader context. Let the reader know where the information is coming from and where it's going.
- Details. Give us the rest of the information now that the brain is primed by the first 2 steps.

Chapter 5: You Shall Get the Point Across

Once you've secured the attention of your audience, the next step is to embed your message in memory and make sure people clearly understand it. Assume that others can easily misunderstand you unless you simplify your words and pointedly explain your meaning. Communicating well is a form of verbal/written painting. You want to create colorful images and memorable Nuggets of truth in the minds of others. You want to engage the imagination and touch the emotions. Design your message with definitions, illustrations, and shortcuts that will overcome any mental metadata differences, light up the brain, and create meaning and memory.

Chapter 6: You Shall Get on the Same Page

You've probably heard the common expression, "A verbal contract isn't worth the paper it's written on." You need to nail things down. In writing. In a word: solidify. People tend to listen in bits and pieces, and they often don't put all the pieces together. So do your audience a favor by employing:

- Repetition: make major points more than one time, in more than one way.
- Conclusion: be explicit about the application; Don't assume correct implications or deductions.

- Summarization: draw together the information and conclusions in an easy-to-remember format.

The most effective way to get people on the "same page" is a written summary. Detailed documentation is important; But, by and large, people can only remember and apply brief, memorable summaries. Alignment and agreement need to occur based on clearly articulated solidifying statements: goals, purpose statements, executive summaries, scope descriptions, and step-by-step plans. Document conclusions, create clear summaries, and outline specific calls to action that everyone can sign off on. This is especially important for any kind of collaborative effort.

Part 3: The Clarity Fuel Formal Tools

Chapter 7: Statements

A statement is a declaration that expresses a fact, opinion, or idea. It is a sentence or phrase that is either true or false, and its purpose is to pointedly communicate information or express a thought or belief. You should be able to distill an idea into a brief, simple sentence for the brain to process it immediately. A statement is not big, and it's not ambiguous. Statements say one thing well and waste no words. They're meant to be processed instantly and remembered easily. Think of statements as simple, declarative Nuggets.

Chapter 8: Snippets

A snippet is a short excerpt of something larger. It might be a factoid, an example, a keyword, a statistic, or a quote. It's a sneaky little piece of information that the brain cannot help but seize on. Snippets are the sound bites of sound bites, turning on the light in the brain and carrying an oversized payload of impact.

Pitchy branding taglines are great examples of snippets: "Just do it" – Nike and "Think different" – Apple

"Your main competitor is the noise" is a phrase I often use that contains a snippet. Because it's surprising and relevant, it sticks. Let's say you have a paragraph's worth of content to share. Look at all those words and ask yourself, "What is the main point here?" Then put that into a single sentence. Now go further and see if you can reduce that nugget into a pithy phrase.

Chapter 9: Specifics

Our minds are far more inclined to tune in to specifics rather than generalities. Specifics are particulars that are explicit and well-defined. Specifics may be names, numbers, places, dates, details, and examples. Specifics lead to recall, differentiation, and well-defined action. Particulars stick. Generalities are forgettable. Leaders and managers can set their people up for success only by giving memorable and visualizable particulars: precise targets, tangible expectations, specific and measurable goals, and clear-cut expected behaviors.

Chapter 10: Stories

Everyone knows that the human brain is hardwired for stories. Storytelling is often aimed at entertaining, educating, or inspiring an audience. Stories include a beginning, middle, and end. They follow a narrative arc that includes a conflict or challenge, a rising action or reaction, a climax, and a resolution. Stories stick far more effectively than facts. There are many forms of stories that you can apply to get your point across:

- Origin story: how the company (or the individual) started on this quest.
- Evolution story: what happened along the way to bring you to this point?
- Success story: a personal anecdote that illustrates an important point showing why you or your company provides value or fits in a certain way.
- Comeback story: the protagonist sinks into defeat and then rises again to victory and success.
- Case study: stories about how people accomplished something.
- How-to stories: a step-by-step account of how to accomplish a certain thing.
- Heroes journey story: wrapping up a lesson or perspective in the familiar narrative of hero versus obstacle or bad guy

Chapter 11: Stakes

The stakes refer to what is at risk or what you can gain (or lose) as a result of a particular action or decision. Why was the COVID-19 pandemic panic so widespread? Because leaders and health professionals created the perception that the stakes – for every individual, country, even the world – couldn't be higher. Ask yourself: What's at stake for you? For your department? For your customers or patients? For the company? Inertia is the enemy of change. You have something important to say. Tell people why it matters, just as I'm telling you in this book why effective communication is so vital to your success.

Symbols play off something very powerful already existing in our brains: a memory hook.

Chapter 12: Symbols

Symbolic language can wrap multiple meanings into a few vivid words, sometimes even a single word. Symbols play off something very powerful already existing in our brains: a memory hook. When you tell others that "Laura comes into the room like a category 4 hurricane," we know that Laura is a social force of nature, not a reserved introvert. When using symbolic language to describe yourself or your company, keep the language positive and aspirational. Ask yourself, "What is this like?", "What's a real-life picture of this?", or "How would I help a 10-year-old make the leap from the known to the new?"

Chapter 13: Side-by-Sides

One of the most helpful ways you can help people understand ideas is to line them up with other concepts. Compare. Contrast. When making a comparison, you should first identify the similarities between the subjects being compared, followed by their differences. For contrast, you should focus on identifying the differences between the subjects being contrasted, followed by their similarities. In both cases, it is important to provide specific examples to clarify your points to the reader. The ultimate side-by-side advertising initiative was the Pepsi challenge, where tasters blindly tasted Coke and Pepsi and had to choose which soda they preferred.

Chapter 14: Summaries

Brief recaps are far easier for the human brain to process and remember than long-form explanations. A summary is a brief overview or condensed version of a longer text, speech, or other piece of content. If what you're communicating is important, make it sticky. Your brain hosts a truly staggering number of loops. The more hooks an idea has, the better it will cling to memory. If you are like me, you want to get your message across and embed it as fast as possible.

Part 4: Applying Clarity Best Practices

Chapter 15: Email

Composing punchy, effective emails is your best training for putting clarity into practice. Each day, multiple times a day, you can apply all the tactics you've learned in this book. When you and your team master e-mail clarity the rest will come naturally. Set a hook to your subject line and the first sentence to draw the recipient in, then make the rest of the message easy to absorb. Here are some simple suggestions to make your e-mail design more brain-friendly and effective:

- Have a clear Point B before you start composing.
- Make it obvious up front what matters most about this message and what the recipient should do about it.
- Make it mobile-friendly.
- Inside the main text of the message, consider judiciously using a highlight or a bold font for the main point to ensure that the busy reader immediately grasps the purpose.
- Use white space to avoid a jumbled overload of words.
- Compose brief, single-focused messages that the reader can respond to immediately,
- Use bullet points to provide quick, easy-to-skim summaries if your communication needs to be longer

Chapter 16: Presentations

When presenting to a live or online audience, have a clear upfront hook secure engagement, and avoid information overload. Present a compact theme or message on each slide, accompanied by no more than one graphic. Use a simple design approach. Sprinkle in some humor and personal anecdotes. Include visual snippets and player video clips. Give tangible examples to illustrate specific points. Remember, you're not being asked merely to deliver a presentation. You're being asked to deliver value. What will your audience walk away with that will spark discussion, inside, and change?

Chapter 17: Teaching and Training

Great teachers make ideas come alive. They don't just transmit, they illuminate. Unstructured information leaves it to the listener to sort through the haystack and find the

needle. The teachers and trainers are there to prioritize and make sense of that information:

- Map out your content into major points, minor points, and supporting information. Ask yourself: what matters most? Why does it matter? How should I expect my audience to respond and act?
- Let learners know the relevance and the stakes right away.
- Generously weave illustrative and interesting stories into every lesson.
- Remember, you're not only there to impart gems of wisdom, but to make the process enjoyable.
- Use the news. Current events are on everybody's mind.
- Ask audience members to provide their own instances about how a particular principle or our team worked itself out in their lives.

Chapter 18: Leadership

Leadership involves talent management and talent management means proactively wrapping words around unique personal or professional characteristics and putting people in the right roles. Leaders also provide clarity of message. They set the direction and communicate the direction – unambiguously. Here's how leaders can employ clarity principles and practice on a day-to-day level:

- Help every team member gain self-awareness by identifying their value and their strengths.
- If employees are unclear about their day-to-day responsibilities, ask them what they perceive to be their three main priorities and then explain and clarify what you are expecting.
- Practice imparting clear details and tangibles. Goals, priorities, processes, outcomes, deliverables – all should be as practical and measurable as possible.
- Praise team members by pointing out very specific contributions.
- Create specific purpose statements for each part of the organization.
- Assemble stories that sum up the values and successes of the organization and disseminate them regularly.

Chapter 19: Collaboration

Collaboration is key for any business. But unified effort can only come from aligned expectations. Begin with the end in mind and then reverse engineer the steps to get there.

- Don't expect multiple stakeholders to magically have common goals and expectations. Instead, articulate the highest-level goal and gain verbal and written agreement on that before moving to a deeper outline of expectations and processes
- Practice iterative development on your projects. Start with the simplest framework and gain agreement, then move to the next level of development.
- A written plan, both at the high level and detailed level, is the key to successful collaboration.
- When working with external vendors, be sure to schedule a kickoff meeting where everyone gets to agree on all expectations, timelines, and variables.
- Define and assign specific responsibilities.
- Write out a clear purpose and agenda for each meeting and provide written summaries afterward to ensure agreement and alignment.

Define, summarize, and document. That's how you get collaborators on the same page.

Chapter 20: Purpose Statements

Positioning and purpose statements provide the North Star for any company to express exactly why they exist. Purpose statements should be brief, practical, and specific to create clarity and motivation. Don't settle for vague, generic purpose statements that could apply to 1000 other companies. Aim for something authentically aspirational. A purpose implies something helpful, something higher, something better. Eliminate every whiff of jargon. Each division across the organization should have its own specific purpose, and people in those departments need to align with their unique organizational values.

Chapter 21: Branding

The goal of granting is to occupy mind-space and heart-trust. Most people think of names, logos, and taglines as the essence of the brand, but that's only part of the story. But when it comes to a clear outward-facing message, the real foundation of the brand can be found in the statements and stories that sum up your specialness. Your target customer is looking for help and results, not platitudes. Define your niche and your unique value proposition. Your brand should be summarized in five clear statements:

- What. Exactly what solution or product you are offering

- Whom. Your specific target customer
- Why. The customer pain or aspiration you're addressing
- How. Your unique superpower
- Where. The geographic or marketplace areas you serve.

Chapter 22: Personal Branding and Career Direction

Personal branding is the way people perceive you, your reputation, and what you represent. It helps you differentiate yourself from others, establish your credibility, expand your network, advance your career, and remain consistent in your actions. People are going to think thoughts of you. Why not shape those ideas with accurate words instead of leaving them to chance? Self-awareness, with strengths and value summarized in keywords and brief phrases, will be your guide to making the best career decisions.

Chapter 23: Social Media

In sales, you need to have a clear focus on who your audience is and what they will find valuable from you. As a general rule, don't create long-winded dissertations on social platforms. An accompanying visual to your post will generally increase interest level and engagement. Package your return message using brevity and shortcuts. Be active where your target audience is most active and easily found. Have a clear purpose if you engage in social media. Establish yourself as a thought leader by consistently sharing your insights and other resources around your particular area of interest.

Chapter 24: Networking

Your professional network is the source of your future opportunities. So, you need to equip your colleagues with clarity the memorable words and images that best portray who you are. Don't jump into networking opportunities by blabbing about all about your needs right away. Instead, create warm and interesting relationships by being a "storyasker." Be sure to prepare a few brief stories you can tell others that illustrate what value you bring and what types of open doors you are looking to find.

Conclusion

This book is meant to give the broadest possible audience a host of immediate takeaways for the most common circumstances. You can apply these practices as an individual, but the greatest impact will be teams and companies that together embrace the approach and transform their organization. The Clarity Fuel Formula is a long overdue universal protocol for effective human-to-human communication and is adaptable and applicable to just about any setting. Now you know the rules, and you have the tools. You're ready to win the noisy battle. Let's get to the point, shall we? Let's do clarity!



Steve Woodruff is known as the King of Clarity. His decades of business consulting and client training have had a uniquely creative focus on communications clarity based on principles of practical brain science. Steve, a graduate of Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN, is the author of the acclaimed 2018 book Clarity Wins and is a contributing author to the 2017 book Unstuck. He launched his solo consulting business in 2006, and currently resides in historic Franklin, TN.

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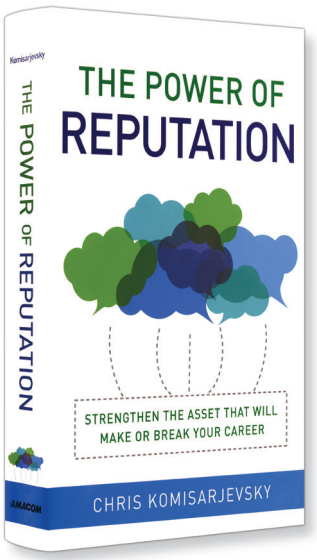
The Power of Reputation

Chris Komisarjevsky

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The Power of Reputation

Strengthen the Asset that Will Make or Break Your Career



by Chris Komisarjevsky

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

To accomplish your goals — whatever they are — people must believe in you. In any business or field, success is built on a foundation of character, communication and trust — the building blocks of reputation. A positive reputation can often mean the difference between failure and great success. *The Power of Reputation* gives you an action plan for creating the kind of reputation that generates trust and paves the way for lasting success. With instructive real-world examples, this book lays out step by step how to build a platform of respect for and confidence in your decisions — and a commitment from others to your goals. Filled with straightforward, practical techniques for methodically crafting a strong, solid reputation, *The Power of Reputation* shows you how to be authentic, open to ideas, a strong communicator, and, by your actions, demonstrate over and over again that you are a person of character. Reputation isn't something that just happens … nor is it something you can afford to leave to chance. This invaluable resource reveals powerful methods for building and leveraging a strong reputation — and using it to achieve extraordinary results.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to leverage the communication techniques that engage others and create positive, open dialogues.
- Ways to build strong connections by personalizing your approach.
- How to earn respect by demonstrating your respect for others.

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Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries®, 2 Christy Drive, Suite 302, Chadds Ford, PA 19317 USA
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Vol. 41, No. 2 (3 parts), Part 3, February 2019 • Order #41BS02

THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THE POWER OF REPUTATION**

by Chris Komisarjevsky

The author: Chris Komisarjevsky retired in 2005 as worldwide chief executive officer of Burson-Marsteller, one of the world's leading global public-relations and public-affairs firms, after a 35-year career in public relations.

The Power of Reputation: Strengthen the Asset that Will Make or Break Your Career by Chris Komisarjevsky. Copyright ©2012 Chris Komisarjevsky. Summarized by permission of the publisher, AMACOM, a division of American Management Association, Intl. 210 pages, $22.00, ISBN-13: 978-0-8144-1797-3. To purchase this book, go to www.amazon.com or www.bn.com.

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PART I: CHARACTER

This Is the Era of Personal Character

Reputation is earned through the demonstration of a positive personal character. Our era has witnessed the demise of industry giants who thought they were above the law, lied to customers and investors, used creative accounting to hide misconduct, earned profit at the expense of everyone associated with them, and in the process destroyed all traces of trust.

There is a fine line between the reputation of an individual and the reputation of the organization where the individual works. Be conscious of both.

Four Steps for You to Use in Your Career

1. Adopt the perspective that your current work and its environment are part of an important learning experience.
2. Develop strength of character. Vicky Casal, a talented young woman, had to summon the courage and strength simply to learn from a situation in which she did not respect her boss. Does this take self-control? Of course. Does this take focusing on the right values? No doubt.
3. Write down what you are learning about values and behavior. Vicky's attention to character showed when she described herself in her resume, her cover letter and on interviews.
4. Begin looking for companies whose values go hand-in-hand with yours.

With strong character, others will believe in you, emulate your commitment and passion, work as hard as you do and respect your judgment.

Experiences that Shape Character

Steve Joenk, now president and CEO of AXA Equitable Funds Management Group, LLC, was asked to sweep the warehouse floor on his first day as a freshly minted MBA. He learned pretty quickly that, if he was to be respected, there couldn't be any job that he wouldn't do if it needed to get done.

A First Exercise in Character

What experiences have shaped the way you act and the decisions you make? Take out a pen and paper and list them, noting what happened, what you felt, what lessons you learned, how you've applied these lessons at other times and how these lessons are applicable to your life now.

Role Models

Learn from others. You can seek out both mentors and champions as role models.

Mentors help us learn the skills you need to do the job well. Their career guidance can often span our entire career. A mentor should be willing to tell you what you are doing well and where you need to improve in a candid and genuine way.

Champions take us under their wing and help create new career opportunities, different assignments and even promotions. They are strong internal advocates for us.



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Rebecca S. Clement, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Ashleigh Imus**, Senior Editor; **Kylie O'Connor**, Graphic Designer; **A. Imus**, Contributing Editor

For a champion, seek someone in a position to know what is going on in the organization who is experienced at navigating through an organization's internal management and politics.

A Second Exercise in Character

Think about the people whom you admire. What are the character traits that inspire you? As you think about something they did, hold your own "post-mortem." Critique your own performance. Write things down. Answer these questions honestly: Why did you do what you did? How would you do it if you could do it over again?

Define Your Values

Vincent van Gogh loved portraiture but had no money to pay models to sit for him. So, he invested in a mirror. After painting at least 20 self-portraits in Paris, he created *Self-Portrait as an Artist*, one of his most famous paintings. Only after someone looks in the mirror and truly see him- or herself can he or she begin to shape other's perceptions.

The Magic List

What values do you hold dearest? The Foundation for a Better Life lists values at www.values.com. There, you can click on each value and read a short description. Ask yourself, "If I were in danger of losing my job, what values would I not sacrifice even if it meant I were to be let go?" How do the experiences that shaped your character relate to your core values?

The Values Test

The questions that follow reflect true-to-life situations you could find yourself facing. They cut to the core of values and our character.

1. Would I be tempted, even to a minor degree, to shade the facts?
2. What are my relationships like with my co-workers, team members, bosses and clients? Do I respect them?
3. Am I comfortable sharing the power and the credit?
4. If the job doesn't go well, do I look for someone to blame, or do I look at myself first?
5. Am I genuinely interested in hearing opinions and ideas that are different from mine?
6. Am I personally vested in my organization's success, or am I just putting in the time?
7. Do I simply tell my staff what to do, or do I ask questions so they can discover the solutions for themselves?
8. Do my actions mirror my words, and is my behavior consistent?
9. Am I prepared to learn new skills and approaches?
10. Can people trust me to support them? Am I there for them?

Writing a Declaration of Your Values

Now … write your own. Declare your values in a way that is highly motivating and that you can return to again and again throughout your career.

Authenticity Rules

While writers draft speech materials for executives, politicians and presidents, the speaker often jumps in to change material at the last minute. The final notes are filled with their handwritten changes. These changes are often the best part. They are personal additions that reflect the heart of the person giving the speech. The result is that he or she radiates the confidence of personal experience.

Your Confidence Inspires Confidence in You. Your sense of authentic confidence is contagious. There is an energy and a determination that those around you sense and feel.

Be Personal. There really isn't any distinction between our personal and our professional reputations. That, actually, is a strength and a positive thing. It makes your actions and your reputation even more genuine because you don't cross borderlines between aspects of your life.

Foster a Culture of Openness. Openness brings to the surface new and sometimes revolutionary ideas. If you want to thrive, open up and show your true colors. Others will reciprocate, and the entire organization will benefit.

Authentic Action. Build a systematic thought process or a series of questions that you always ask yourself when faced with making a decision to act in some way. As you form your own questions, you can start with these:

How will my actions affect others?

Is it an authentic statement by me? Am I proud of my decision?

Would I be comfortable if my actions were the subject of an article on the front page of a major newspaper?

More important, what if I had to explain to my son or daughter — mother or father — why I decided what I did?

The Double-Edged Sword of the Digital World

The digital world has dramatically changed the way that reputations are built, questioned or thrown into doubt.

Comments and opinions travel around the world at mega speeds and are read by people who may have no frame of reference for what they are reading. The Internet can create product successes in record time, launch new initiatives and create excitement about an innovative venture. It can also swing elections, urge boycotts or foster riots. If it can do that, think what it can do for or to your reputation.

How about those pictures posted on Facebook? Those chat or text comments by someone who has never even met you? Today, words and images last forever. It has put a stronger emphasis on what you do every day in this online world to shape that reputation in the way you want.

Selling Authentically

Rose Mann is assistant dean of advancement for the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science at the University of Miami. She offers clear advice: "I might be a fundraiser, but I don't sell. In fact, I don't know how to sell. What I can do is speak from the heart. I can't encourage someone to give if it doesn't mean something to me. I believe in it. I simply tell the truth."

The demand for candor, understanding and clarity of purpose is greater than ever before. Transparency creates confidence and underscores authenticity. If you aren't transparent, then you aren't authentic. You are hiding something. And people are less likely to trust.

Caring and Respect

Make no mistake. Caring and sharing are not signs of weakness. Caring and sharing are building blocks for reputation, character, and a feeling among everyone you do business with that what you are doing is special, fueled by respect, sharing power and responsibility and caring for each other.

There are seven steps to successful caring and sharing:

1. Pick the people you work with well. Focus on those whom you trust explicitly.
2. Vest them with the raw facts. Candidly tell them the potential problems, the risks and the challenges.
3. Don't oversell their roles or the opportunities. Make sure they understand how difficult the challenges are.
4. Let them talk. Keep every discussion a dialogue.
5. Ask them if they need help. Then help them get the resources they need.
6. Check in to see how they are doing. Don't check on them, but check in with them.
7. Share the victory and the failures.

The Art of Caring

Start by spending time with people and listening to what they have to say. Ask them what is important and what they would recommend. Don't jump in. Just listen. If they believe you want to know, they will know you care. Encourage them. You will build a reputation as someone to whom others look for motivation.

PART II: COMMUNICATION

Seek to Understand

If all you do is remember one concept, remember this: Listen first … talk second. To truly listen, pay attention and take notes. Here are three tips to remember:

Don't Be a "Know-It-All." If you come across as thinking you have all the answers, you will earn a reputation for not being a team player, and in today's work environment that is the kiss of death to your career.

Give People Face Time. Don't let important issues rest without an in-person discussion. There is no better way to address an important issue and demonstrate a human approach to your business role than getting together in one room to discuss important decisions, strategies and initiatives.

Ask Lots of Questions. As everyone knows, there is nothing quite as powerful as a series of well-thought-through questions. And that requires preparation. A lot of it. Reporters and attorneys recommend the following:

- Think through various scenarios beforehand.
- Do your research.
- Ask the "what ifs."
- Open the discussion so everyone can comment and ask their own questions.

When you ask questions, you need to offer a secure sense that candor and openness will be protected.

Keep It Practical: Ask for Examples

Probing and asking questions are key. But so is asking for examples. You have to push it one step further so that people are pressed to make it practical. In business, having a reputation for being practical is an asset.

Effective Communications

In coaching a physician for an interview on 60 Minutes, the team at Burson-Marsteller was very harsh: Don't

squirm in the chair. Don't cover your mouth. Speak clearly. Look directly at the camera and the interviewer. Think before you talk. Be pleasant. Feel comfortable. Answer with authority. And draw on the facts. The words, the voice, the body language all must come together.

The Call for Serious and Transparent Communications

In a *McKinsey Quarterly* interview, Jeroen van der Veer, retired CEO of Royal Dutch Shell, strongly urged managers to take communication seriously: "Nearly every discussion, you start in the first two minutes with not necessarily the subject you have to discuss but [instead with] "What do you think? How long will it last?" And people, they expect an answer. You better think about that. So you have to think a lot about communication. Externally and internally, what are your key messages?"

Speaking To Be Heard

How do you enhance your communication skills as you build your own reputation? Here are some ideas:

- Paint images when you talk and outline plans.
- Name those who are essential to your success.
- Speak from personal experience.
- Most of all, speak from the heart.

There is no substitute for straight talk. Straight talk means no "spin." The concept of spin is disrespectful. It flies in the face of trust and is devoid of integrity.

Body Language

Together with what you say, how you behave when you say it does matter. In fact, it matters a great deal. You don't need a television studio to rehearse and see yourself. A digital camera that takes short movies will do well. Think about the impact of the following kinds of movements:

The Smirk. You twist your mouth. That little movement with your lips, and everyone knows you are disdainful of what someone else has said.

The Slouch. As parents teach their children, sit up straight, sit in the front row and pay attention.

The Squirm. Did you sit still, or did you bounce around, looking left and right, almost as if you were avoiding the discussion or trying to sneak away?

The Swipe. After answering a tough question, your hand wiped across your mouth. A classic movement that tells everyone you had to "wipe off" what you just said. Likely, your answer wasn't genuine.

The Eyeballs. Look closely at others with whom you work and those you want to work with you and follow your direction. Don't let those eyes stray.

The Hands. Your hands are emotive. They add conviction and enthusiasm. They emphasize. Use them wisely, and use them well.

Preparing for Important Meetings and Discussions

To make others feel appreciated and empowered, here are some tips to follow:

- Frame the discussion. Not everyone thinks like you. So, think like them. If you can anticipate and address their concerns head on, you will gain credibility.
- Consider the opinions of others. Think about the impact your messages will have on everyone.
- Be credible. Verify all your facts. Explain in detail. Be open to questions.
- Lay out your reasoning very clearly. Take pains to fully explain your thinking.
- Talk straight. Explain situations in clear terms.
- Ask for feedback.

My goal is intense preparation. Take notes. Imagine all the questions. Working through the issues when the pressure is the least gives you the chance to excel when the tension and the pressures are the greatest.

Engaging Others

Successful businesspeople believe in proactive and straightforward communication. They know they must master the traditional and leading-edge digital communication tools and understand the pivotal role that communication plays in engaging others and building reputation. They genuinely want to know what others think and how committed they are. Simply put, there must be a sharing of views through substantive engagement involving team members. Dialogue wins the day every time.

Successful people also know that engagement demonstrates respect between themselves and their team or clients and generates an enthusiasm for shared strategies, tactics and goals. They believe in trying to reach a group understanding, if not consensus and agreement, on how to move forward in reaching certain goals. If that is possible, it goes a very long way toward team responsibility for the outcome.

Eight Steps to Engaged Action

Following Eight Steps to Engagement can ensure that your decisions and communications help you engage effectively and successfully.

1. Research facts and opinions.
2. Engage with those who matter, and listen to their views.

3. Decide what to do.
4. Communicate your decision.
5. Act/Behave/Implement your decision.
6. Communicate again — what you did and why.
7. Engage again, and listen to reactions.
8. Evaluate and plan for next steps.

Be Personal

Reputations are both personal and professional. Your personal and professional reputations are linked inextricably. Experienced and successful people relate to the people they work with in ways that are very personal. They make a point of knowing each other well. They speak in personal terms, not in "organizational speak."

I recall a colleague whose client company had announced a product recall late one afternoon, and it was clear the next morning the media would be running with a series of critical stories. So what did he do that demonstrated his personal commitment so dramatically? Without missing a beat, he was up almost all night on the Internet to read the stories and send them to his client. And then he was at the local newsstand to get the first copies of the paper right off the truck. By 7:00 in the morning, he had prepared both a report and an analysis of the media coverage so that his client could brief his superiors, decide on next steps and address the concerns that had been raised.

Some Appropriate Ways to Demonstrate a Personal Approach

- Remember the importance of a smile.
- Shake hands (firmly).
- Look them in the eye when you shake hands.
- Know those you are meeting. Learn something about them in advance.
- Ask if there's something you can do when someone working for you is faced with a family or personal challenge.
- Talk about your family and your interests.
- Put whatever you say in a context that relates to those around you.
- Do something unexpected ... a small gift for a special success or just a thank-you note.

Most important, go out of your way. Do more than you are asked to do. It will be noticed. Your reputation will climb, and your career will, too.

"How" Is More Important than "What"

A personal approach can prove to be the key factor in making a sale and earning the trust of a customer or a client. If you ask why one qualified applicant is hired over another, some will describe it as "chemistry." The key is personal commitment. It comes across and resonates with each of us.

PART III: TRUST

Build a Circle of Trust

You need to believe in and trust yourself. That is the first step. Trust yourself, and you will trust others. Trusting others is so important. When you do, those you trust most often live up to expectations. With time, they too trust themselves and, in turn, also have the self-confidence to trust others.

Sharing power is an essential skill. How to ensure that even the most driven businesspeople put ego aside to focus on the organization and the team? Leaders need to remember that what counts is not that they are right but that the team does the right thing.

Steps to Earn Trust

Here are some tips for earning trust:

- Learn from those around you. Recognize others as professionals whose input is critical to your task.
- Ask the people you work with to be your closest ally and your fiercest critic.
- Be open to comments, in-depth questions and criticism.
- Work from the macro to the micro. Lay out the strategy and long-term goals before you attend to the details.
- Take the time to fully explain your thinking.
- Share the leadership role.

The trust people have in how the organization and its people will behave affects how they describe the brand. Richard Edelman, president and chief executive officer of Edelman Worldwide, explains: "Trust … is what I call a 'protective agent' and leads to tangible benefits. Trust creates the environment where there can be success. At the same time, the corollary is true: Lack of trust is a barrier. This calls for what I describe as a 'new trust architecture.' You cannot only focus on 'what we do,' but we also have to focus on 'how we do it.'"

Overcoming Threats to Trust

Office politics can quickly undermine a culture of trust. There can be jealousy over the symbols of power, like furniture or concern over titles, salaries, work assignments, promotions and new assignments. When it strikes, you become reluctant to trust others. In short, you question intent.

Rising Above the Politics

Here are some principles to keep in mind in a highly political environment:

- Be clear and straightforward.
- Understand your own motives.
- Don't play the game. Stay above the fray and above politics. In the long run, your credibility will benefit.
- Keep your dignity. Don't gossip.
- Focus on the job. Keep doing what you do best.
- Be smart. You shouldn't play the game, but then again, you shouldn't ignore it either.

If those principles don't work for you, look for another position. It is time to leave.

Take a Stand

Sometimes, somewhere, someone will do something wrong. That is a given. The important question is, How do you respond? One view is to be direct and straightforward. You have to talk about it, both what to do to ensure trust and what would be done if it were breached.

Anticipating Threats

With time, you want to have anticipated situations that could threaten your business enterprise. If you don't, you might lose control, possibly jeopardizing your ability to make the tough decisions needed when it comes to values and reputation. So what are the warning signals of a possible threat?

From individuals you need to watch for the following:

- Behavior changes.
- Work performance drops off.
- Conflicts with colleagues emerge.
- Rumors circulate.
- Individuals are asked off teams or not selected for assignments.
- An increased number of employee resumes are "on the street."

From the company itself, watch for these signs:

- Sales drop off.
- Rumors circulate about financial or other problems.
- Management behavior changes.
- Information is withheld.
- You start hearing disturbing stories about the organization from outside.

If you think there might be a problem, there probably is.

The Need for Consequences

Consequences and punishment for unacceptable behavior are powerful statements. There can be no strength, conviction or genuine reputation without accepting consequences and without being able to call for their delivery or to develop them yourself. Mistakes can damage reputations … both yours and the organization's.

When You Make a Mistake

Few things strike fear in the hearts of anyone as quickly and as dramatically as realizing they have made a big mistake. When you do, you take responsibility, pick up the pieces, correct any problems that may have resulted and move forward.

A Two-Part Analysis for Recovery

Most of the time, you have the opportunity to address a mistake, find another solution, make a correction and give it another try. You need to take a candid look back at how the mistake happened and perform a two-part analysis: factual and personal.

The factual analysis requires us to understand the facts and examine the circumstances that led up to the mistakes. Straightforward answers to some tough operational and management questions are the start. You might call on your finance, operations, audit or legal divisions. Sometimes, however, you need to bring in outside experts, such as independent legal counsel or investigative and security firms. While costly, this kind of factual analysis is only the beginning, and in most cases it is the easiest part of the review.

Far more difficult is the personal analysis. Ask yourself, "What role did I play? What could I have done differently? How am I going to rectify the situation? Am I going to take full responsibility and address the problem head on?"

The Road Back

When you make a mistake, you need to deal with the problem directly. The best way to do that is not to shy away or shirk responsibility. Rather, step back and take a deep breath. Before you act, give yourself some breathing room and think.

With the Internet and social media, the speed with which reputations are damaged — if not destroyed — is incredible. The rule of thumb is this:

First, you need seriously to consider a response if social media have voiced criticism of your values, your decisions, your integrity and your reputation.

Second, if you do respond, you must respond within 12 hours. So remember … you have 12 hours or less within which to take responsibility and say, "I am sorry."

An Enduring Reputation

One of the most challenging lessons for each of us is that managing our own career is up to each of us alone. No one will build our career for us. Just like anything else of importance, you have to take charge and commit to the long term.

It doesn't happen overnight. And we must work on it every day, day after day.

As you build your career, you begin to look for opportunities to shape the way you are seen. You work harder, show greater resolve, adhere to strong values, focus on your character, become engaged communicators, never violate trust, and demonstrate at every turn that you are thoughtful and caring.

Self-Assessment for Success

To make the most of your career and earn the success you deserve, it is important to know yourself. The key is to be more proactive than most and very confident in your resolve.

Along the way, you need to be absolutely candid in asking and answering three critical groups of questions about yourself and your career.

First: Am I introspective? Can I look back and objectively analyze what I did and, more important, why I chose that particular course of action?

This first group of questions is tough to address, and realistic answers take maturity and determination.

Second: Did my decisions work? Did they get me where I wanted to go? If I look clearly at the decisions I made and the motives behind them, did they actually produce the results I wanted?

This second group of questions requires objectivity and reflection, both of which are sometimes difficult for managers, especially if they don't want to be seen as having made a mistake.

Third: Am I up to the test? Did I have the courage to take on new and different challenges, especially those that might put my values to the test? In short, am I capable, as the saying goes, of "walking into the lion's den"?

This last group of questions puts you under pressure to explore how determined you really are.

Be certain of your resolve and ability to handle the toughest kinds of assignments, even those that might, on the surface, appear to threaten our careers if they don't work out the way you want.

Master the Basics

Be smart. Think long term. Tell your customer or client what you are going to do, and then just do it. There are no excuses.

The following six steps form a foundation for success:

1. Manage your career.
2. Seek new skills.
3. Build a network.
4. Foster work relationships with your supervisor and human-resources professionals.
5. Work smart.
6. Exceed expectations.

Reputation Paves the Way

A strong reputation — built on character, communication and trust — is the foundation for lasting success. Your reputation is yours to forge. Communicate often and more often. Capture every chance to engage others, hear what they say, listen to what will add value and give credit where credit is due. People will listen to you and look to you … if you trust them and they trust you.

Trust is at the heart of reputation. Trust in others is giving them the opportunity to do what is right. Trust that others have in you is what gives you the opportunity to lead and be successful.

In short, always remember — building a strong reputation is one of your most important jobs. Do it well. Time and time again.

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The Power of Reputation*, you'll also like:

1. ***Credibility* by James Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner**. This best-seller builds on more than 30 years of research to show you how to make credibility the foundation of your leadership.

2. ***The Character Triangle* by Lorne Rubis**. Rubis examines and defines three distinct but interdependent values that are a "playbook" for attaining rewards in any type of situation.

3. ***Trust Agents* by Chris Brogan and Julien Smith**. Find out how to build profitable relationships with trust agents and become an influencer based in transparency..

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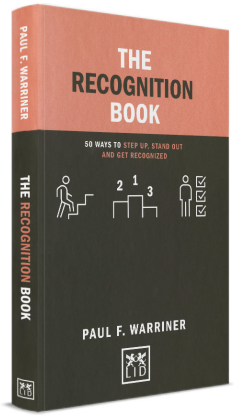
The Recognition Book

Paul F. Warriner

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The Recognition Book

50 Ways to Step Up, Stand Out and Get Recognized



by **Paul F. Warriner**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Realizing your fullest potential and getting the professional recognition you deserve requires more than just being good at your job. No matter what industry or where you are in your career path, ***The Recognition Book*** will help you define your career goals and identify the character traits, behaviors, and skills to develop in order to reach them.

Coach and trainer Paul Warriner explains that people who have concrete goals and a written-out plan of action outperform those who do not. He provides a four-step framework to help you shape your individual plan and 50 attributes that can make you shine in any workplace.

Recognition is energizing and motivating, but it can be an elusive element of our work lives. It also means different things to people: a higher salary, a promotion, the opportunity to do something new, or a thank you. What does it mean to you and how do you attain it?

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to create a recognition plan
- How to positively enhance your relationships with others
- How to get noticed the right way
- How to give constructive feedback

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Sarah T. Dayton, Editor-in-Chief • Meghan Kozak, Director of Content • Kylie O'Connor, Graphic Designer

What Recognition Means

The first step is to get to know yourself really well. Take a psychometric test or begin by asking yourself about your core values, your beliefs, what you like about yourself, and what you want to change.

Now, identify what you really want. Most people have hopes and dreams, but never quite formulate them into goals and write them down. Those who identify their goals with a plan of action outperform those who do not. Use the following questions to help you define the ideal career for you.

- If you knew you couldn't fail, what is the one thing you would do?
- If you had all the money you needed, what would you do with your time?
- What activity gives you the greatest buzz?
- If you had six months to live, how would you spend it?

Build Your Recognition Plan

The recognition plan is similar to a business plan. To start, you need to define your vision and goals: where in your career do you want to be recognized, for what, and what does that recognition look like? Set timeframes for your goals, whether a week, a month, a year, or a lifetime. Once your vision and goals are laid out, you need to understand your character traits, how you treat others, how you act at work, and your behaviors. For each of these sections, write down where you are now, where you want to be, and what actions will get you there.

Leave space in each section to record notes, feedback, and any results. As you progress, make adjustments if necessary or set new goals. Constant review of what you've written out will help internalize your goals and keep you moving. You can carry a small business card-sized summary of the main points of your plan as a good reminder.

Using the framework outlined here, take action on a daily basis. Hold yourself accountable for delivering on steps within the plan. Turn your inner qualities into strengths. Identify how people want to be treated and deliver on this in a genuine way. View each challenge with professional curiosity: What can you learn from it? Put it in the context of the master plan. Ask for help when necessary. Success and recognition happen by design; they are the result of taking appropriate action. Follow the steps and ideas in this book and find out what works for you.

Know Who You Are, How You Are

Some of the values and character traits that can help you get recognized in professional settings are enthusiasm, positivity, humility, courage, curiosity, ambition, strength, and creativity. Knowing your strengths, playing to them, and mastering them will take you far. Consider other traits you want to develop.

Being enthusiastic in a new job is easy, but staying enthusiastic can be challenging. Dale Carnegie said, "Act enthusiastic and you'll be enthusiastic." Keeping your end goal in mind will help you maintain the right mindset. Enthusiasm and a positive can-do attitude are contagious and inspire others. If you aren't naturally positive, make a deliberate attempt to find it in yourself. Try practicing mindfulness and surround yourself with positive people.

Every day, opportunities for advancement are presented. Taking more risks can get you recognition, but you need to consider possible outcomes before jumping in. Having good judgment about which risks to take will improve the more you practice and in turn will help you take action more easily.

Curiosity and the desire to improve and grow will lead to better understanding problem-solving. Don't be afraid to ask questions. In sales, if you don't ask for the order, you won't get it.

Creativity is something we all have. You don't have to be an artist, just close your eyes, shut off the internal chatter, and allow yourself time to think. You might join dots that you didn't see before. It doesn't have to be a life-changing idea; it can be a new way to process an order, but the original thought that leads to this change is an example of creativity that can get you recognized.

Examine who you are deep down, take the time to reflect on the traits you exhibit now, the ones you want to develop, and concrete actions you can take to begin to accomplish this. Note this as the first section of your plan.

How You Treat Others

You can positively enhance your relationships with people in many ways. Consider how you treat others, the changes you want to make, and the actions you can take to get there.Active listening is a key skill that is disappearing. According to Stephen Covey: "Most people don't listen with the intent to understand: they listen with the intent to reply." When someone is speaking to you, pay attention to every word, all the nuances, inflections, and the non-verbal signals. Good listening requires

energy and commitment, but the investment is well worth it.

It is easy to blame someone else when you don't get something you want. But it also takes away your control. Instead, take more responsibility and consider what you can do to change the circumstance. Can you start earlier or finish later, or can you prepare more for a meeting? Don't blame others when they are operating their own plan: get your own.

Being compassionate and kind is a sign of strength and awareness of the people you work with. No matter what the situation, your mood, or the occasion, maintaining your respect for others is vital. You don't have to like everyone or everything they have done, but looking for the good in others will raise your awareness and you will find something you can respect about them.

Learn to be grateful and appreciative. Start a gratitude log. Appreciate the small things. When we feel under pressure or something has upset us, take stock and refer to the log. It will help keep things in perspective. You will be remembered for treating others as they want to be treated, for spending time with them and showing an interest.

What You Do

What you do speaks volumes. People may forget what we say, but they remember the way we made them feel. Even doing nothing has an impact. Consider what you do, where you are today, where you want to be, and what you need to do to get there.

Care about what you do and your reputation. It's attention to detail that separates the good from the great. Hold yourself to the highest standards and do not compromise. The impression this approach leaves is a cumulative one. People notice.

Get noticed for doing the right things, not the wrong ones. Think about your personal impact. Don't be late, do a poor job, or miss deadlines. Make sure that you are known for completing a task and making the company look good as well as everyone involved in that process.

Volunteer and participate. It doesn't have to be much, but being involved gets you recognized. Think about what you can help with, but make sure it doesn't take away from other tasks you need time, energy, and passion for. Consider the goals of your plan, your strategy, your approach. If the activity fits in, do it.

Take on more responsibility. Some would say they can't do more. Be the one that does it on your own terms. Think it through, do it well, and get recognized.

Represent your company. Choose the right events; ones that meet your criteria, as well as the company's. Being recognized in this kind of arena can open many doors. Maintain the new connections you make to expand your horizons.

Train others and be a mentor. Help someone develop and teach them what you know. In doing so, you will integrate your knowledge and skills on a deeper level and affect positive change in others.

Run meetings effectively. Only have ones you really need, start on time, have an agenda, and manage it tightly. Having respect for the time and workload of others will be noted. If you have to attend endless meetings, then approach them with a different mindset. Observe others and their behavior. This will give you an advantage and help you learn to navigate the business landscape with more ease.

Follow up. This applies to all aspects of work. When you delegate, don't interfere but check in. Review your notes from meetings and immediately schedule actions. This can elevate your productivity enormously.

Get qualified and stay relevant and current. Take responsibility for your own development and invest in your education. As you get older and more advanced in your career, it can be difficult to stay competitive. Work at staying up to date with everything that is important to your job, career, and development.

Present yourself well. Dress appropriately and be consistent in your messaging from social media to your voice mail message.

Do more of what you love, less of what you tolerate, and none of what you hate. What can you either delete or delegate? Find people who enjoy doing what you don't. Stay involved, but by working with other people's strengths, you will be recognized for leading well.

Maintain a sense of perspective. In a crisis, people can react badly to losses or bad news. Be the one that sees it differently and keeps perspective; your team will look to you. Reframe things, look at yourself as from across the room or through a glass ceiling. What could this person do differently? This third-person view is a useful tool to help develop perspective.

Do your thinking on paper. Writing things down helps us recall, reference, plan, and develop ideas. Writing down and reading your goals on a daily basis, will help reinforce them internally and encourage you to take actions that bring

them to fruition. Goals change and develop, set new ones when the old ones are achieved. Take action every day to build new patterns and habits that serve you better.

Get a coach if you feel stuck. Many people are reticent to ask for help, but it is a strong sign of self-awareness. A coach can offer a new perspective and hold you accountable for actions you need to take.

How You Behave

How you choose to behave is the outward expression of who you are and what you have learned. Repeating positive behavior creates habits that make us who we are. Consider the following, what are the behaviors you need to start demonstrating in order to be recognized?

Be punctual. Recognize that your time, and other people's time, is important and worth far more than money.

Be constructive. When giving feedback, include what was liked, what could have been better, and what would have been desirable. This moves the focus to doing better rather than what went wrong. People can deal with the negative when there is a feeling of building to a more positive outcome. Similarly, don't allow your inner critic to chip away at your self-confidence. Give yourself the recognition you deserve and others will give it too. If you are held back by critical self-talk, use your gratitude log, journaling, and your recognition plan as anchors to build on and help you move forward.

Go the extra mile. Only when you push yourself beyond what is comfortable, will you truly develop. In a sales context, making an extra call, or sending a thank you note can pay dividends. What's your extra mile? Take five minutes and think about it. Write it down, do it, measure it.

Develop a personal style. This isn't just about how you dress, it's about the way you behave and carry yourself. It's a mindset. What you focus on internally finds a way of expressing itself. Aim to enhance who you are.

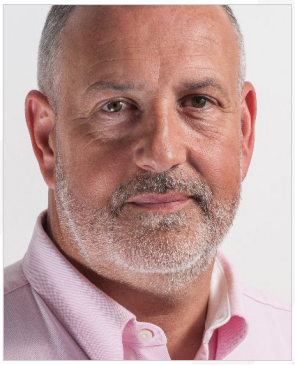
Have a sense of humor. Always be on the lookout for the good in everything and everyone. Being able to not take yourself too seriously will keep things in balance. If humor is not your strong point, practice a joke until you can tell it. People would rather be around colleagues who are upbeat and being able to laugh is a great way to reduce stress.

Learn when to lead and when to follow. Leading a project, a campaign, or a group can be tricky, but by planning out what you are trying to achieve, there is more certainty. Listening to feedback and tweaking the approach are all part of the process. Following someone else can allow you to observe their skills, behaviors, and character.

Be a thought leader. Even reframing existing thinking in a new way is invaluable. Develop an idea and present it. It could be on a process, an approach, a client, or layout. The more you exercise the thought leading muscle, the more your ideas will get bigger, and the more impact they will have.

Be present and fully engaged. Others can tell when your mind is elsewhere. It is disrespectful and rude. Even when you are struggling, act as if you are focused. Act as if you are interested and engaged.

Be committed and decisive. Following through on any plan takes commitment. Only 100% will do. Decide what to commit to and do it. Give yourself every chance to succeed by removing temptations and obstacles. Go all out. It can be hugely liberating to make a firm decision and know that you don't have to keep looking backwards.



Paul F. Warriner is a respected coach, trainer, and consultant with a wide range of experience gained as an employee and entrepreneur. For more than 15 years, he has been successfully coaching and training sales and management teams, business owners, and individuals to be their best.

The Recognition Book: 50 Ways to Step Up, Stand Out and Get Recognized by Paul F. Warriner
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128 pages, ISBN 978-1911498889
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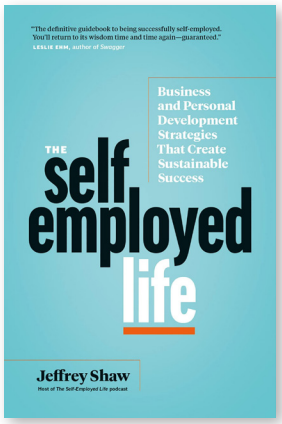
The Self-Employed Life

Jeffrey Shaw

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The Self-Employed Life

Business and Personal Development Strategies That Create Sustainable Success



by **Jeffrey Shaw**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

"Self-employment" is a term that seems simple on its surface. In fact, many people choose to be self-employed because of the simplicity it offers— it's just you, after all. But self-employment in practice is often much more complicated. It involves putting your entire self into your business, with the willingness to grow personally and work every day toward building the successful life that you've always dreamed of achieving.

In this summary of ***The Self-Employed Life,*** you'll benefit from the collected expertise of small business consultant and host of The Self-Employed Life podcast Jeffrey Shaw as he shares the principles of personal development that lead to career development in the field of self-employment. In the end, you'll receive a path forward in self-employment that will allow you to create the success you want and the life you want. As Shaw says, "You may be in business for yourself, but you're not in business by yourself."

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to remove limited thinking and establish forward-thinking mindsets.
- Marketing, business models, systems, and other tools for growing your business.
- Efficient and effective habits to even out the ups and downs of self-employed life.
- A holistic approach to self-employment that brings long-term success and personal fulfillment.

Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries® (ISSN 0747-2196), 225 Wilmington West Chester Pike, #202, Chadds Ford, PA 19317 USA. • Copyright ©2022 by Soundview, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited. • Subscriptions start at $99/year. To subscribe, visit summary.com. • June 2022 • Order #44SS06D Meghan P. Kozak, Editor-in-Chief • Kylie Waytuck, Graphic Designer

Introduction

This is the time for self-employed business owners to come together as a community and take their rightful place in the spotlight. It's time to be accepted in the business world and respected for their tenacity, sacrifices, and impact. Perhaps you were trying to gain control over your destiny when you started your business, but it doesn't feel like it's quite working out as planned. That's okay. Until now, perhaps no one has really provided an alternative. This book provides that alternative— the Self-Employed Ecosystem. It is a proven method to help you gain as much control over your business and destiny as possible, and a guide to managing what you can't control so that you can stay on track.

The Self-Employed Ecosystem

You are about to learn that you can have far more control over your business than you may have thought. You are also going to learn how to manage what seems to be out of your control, so you don't get derailed. You'll learn how to create sustainable success to even out the ups and downs that are inherent in being self-employed, and you'll have everything you need in one place: personal development strategies that prepare you for greater success and bring out your best; business strategies that actually work for you as a self-employed business owner; and effective and efficient daily habits that create sustainable success.

This trifecta of personal development, business strategies, and daily habits is the formula for success -the self-Employed Ecosystem. Why an ecosystem? Because an ecosystem is multiple interconnected elements where the whole works better than its parts. That's precisely what you need and how it works when you are self-employed. You don't have the luxury of checking out when you go home. You don't have a chance to not take it personally. You don't have a huge budget to hire people to solve problems for you.

The self-employed life is running your business and your life, all mixed together all the time. Your personal development, the actions you take, and the habits you maintain, all integrated, all intertwined.

Get Out of Your Own Way

Getting clear about what you want to get away from sets you in a positive direction, away from what you don't want in your life anymore. Intentions, when done in the From-To format, which you'll learn about in the next chapter, create a clear direction as to where you are going. As with any other journey, when you start in a new direction, it's possible you'll come across some obstacles in your way. If you go on a road trip, the obstacle may be traffic. If you set out on a hike in the woods, the obstacle may be a fallen tree obstructing your path. And when you embark on the journey of self-employment, the obstacle is likely going to be yourself.

Keep in mind that an ecosystem is a delicate integration of many components. When those components are working in harmony, the ecosystem is healthy and thriving. When even one part of an ecosystem is out of whack or not functioning well, it affects the health of the entire ecosystem. The blocks that you're going to explore and remove in this chapter are an important part of the health of your Self-Employed Ecosystem. If you don't get these obstacles out of the way, you may never have a truly healthy ecosystem working on your behalf.

What Moves You Forward

Typically, if we can gain even one significant change in our way of thinking or in a business practice, we are more than pleased. It doesn't always take as much energy or as many hours on the therapist's couch to create significant change as we have been led to believe. There really is truth to the adage that life can turn on a dime. The following two practices are the best I know in order to move you toward the success you seek: setting intentions in a way that really works, and holding your vision for your future in a more effective way.

Embrace Hug Marketing

When you see it as your job to emotionally move people, you shift the responsibility of being successful from the customer to yourself, which gives you more control over your business. And it certainly feels better for your customer too. Emotionally engage them by sharing your values, your mission, and your stories.

Make your customers feel like you "get" them. The goal in marketing today is to know your customers so well, they are likely to say, "Wow, it's like you're in my head." That's not just lead generation, it's forming a genuine bond. That's not a customer; it's a relationship. Now sales and marketing no longer feel creepy.

Relationship marketing like this is the sweet spot for the self-employed. It's what we're good at, and with little or no

line between ourselves personally and our business, it's a joy to share ourselves authentically. This is why marketing has evolved to be more aligned with self-employment, offering an opportunity for you to enjoy marketing perhaps more than ever before. People want to do business with businesses that care.

Create an Emotional Journey

The journey on which you take visitors, whether it's prospective customers on your website, readers of your blog, or listeners of your podcast, is a blend of consumer behavior psychology and the subtleties of your audience. For example, typical consumer behavior will say that people need to see their problem before they seek a solution. As a general rule, I would say that is true. However, the nuance is, how do you point out the problem so that your audience responds well? Is it the usual-pointing out their pain approach? Or is it more aspirational, helping them imagine what is possible if their pain point is solved? More than in the past, I think many people prefer an aspirational message.

This idea of knowing the emotional journey your audience needs to go on in order to buy into your offer means understanding them on a whole new level. Yes, it is still about the message— their lingo. It's also about the sequence in which they need to receive it.

Build a Business Model of Multiples

It comes down to this. If there is to be a niche, it's not the one thing you do. It's the one thing you are known for. Your area of expertise. But this "area" is spacious and has breathing room. Your area of expertise is your core brand message and Stand Out Statement.

How is this different from the traditional niche? Well, it's not about being limited to doing one thing; it's about being known for one thing for which there are multiple audiences and multiple ways you can do that thing. That's what makes it a Business Model of Multiples. Plus, by having a Business Model of Multiples, you can have multiple streams of income.

Set Up Systems for Success

As you develop yourself personally, you increase the capacity of success that you are prepared for so that more success can come into your life. You and your business are like the reservoir in the sand, and the incoming flow of water is your incoming business and the life you want to live.

That's why the systems you need for your business, some traditional and some not, should be for the business you want, not the business you currently have. Too often, the systems small businesses use or build are just enough for what they need now. It's like building a walkway one step behind the person walking ahead of you. You're just playing catch up. The better way is to build systems for your business from the perspective of creating the capacity that you want to fill. You could say personal development is a system of developing yourself so that you can receive more.

Create a Steady Foundation

That there's a need for a happy medium if we want to apply new daily habits to our busy lives and businesses. The fact of the matter is, many practices such as yoga and meditation demand much effort and time and are rooted in an Eastern monastic lifestyle. That's great if you live in a monastery in Tibet. But we don't. We lead busy, multitiered lives. The happy medium is in taking these positive behaviors and realistically adapting them to and applying them in our everyday lives, the benefits of which will, in turn, spill over into our self-employed lives. When we do this, we truly have the opportunity for the best of both worlds, where East really meets West and the result is a steady inner environment prepared to manage the unsteady outer environment that we live in.

The personal development and business strategies shared in this summary really do help you gain control over seemingly uncontrollable circumstances. To create sustainable success, we must paradoxically step back into knowing that much of life is out of our control, but we can create steadiness by having the habits to see our way through. Now you're going to learn how to manage the natural ebbs and flows of any ecosystem, be it business or the ocean, without having to ride every wave.

Create a What's Going Right Journal

There are some habits that are so effective, they are worth repeating. That's the case with a What's Going Right Journal. Write down what's going right in your life and career every day. When we focus on this, we tend to see what's going right even more. The journal ticks all of the important boxes for a busy, ambitious person— it's efficient, it works with priming, it provides noticeable results, and it creates an

inward flow of things going right. It even taps into our spiritual sensibility. By paying more attention to what's going right in your life, you are far more likely to recognize more of what's going right.

Expand Your Thinking

To create sustainable success, you need a habit of collecting wisdom, information, and knowledge. You need somewhere to go for inspiration, grounding, and your next strategic idea. You need a habit of depositing into this well of inspiration on a regular basis so that you can withdraw as needed without everything falling apart. You probably already know how often you will need to withdraw in order to stabilize yourself in the ever-changing world of self-employment.

Think of wisdom, information, and knowledge as a reservoir, a space within ourselves that we are responsible for filling up. The cool thing is, it's an unlimited reservoir. What we can gain from others is of unlimited capacity. It is a reservoir we need to feed into on a regular basis. Unlike a literal reservoir, this one has unlimited capacity so that we can grow and expand— a reservoir that is available to us, full of riches, when we need to tap into it.

Switch It Up

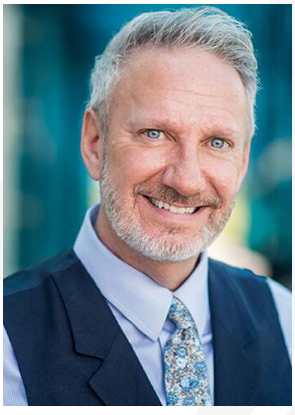
Create a distinct space for all of your different tasks, or at least for as many of them as possible. And don't worry. This does not require a lot of space. You might want a space for your creative work, a space for your logical work, a space for writing, a space for thinking, a space for collaborative work. Aspace for your different roles and tasks. Does this mean you have to have a massive amount of space? Not at all! It's great if you can move around, but if space is restricted, it can be about how you alter a single space to take on different meanings.

What you're aiming to do is trigger mental cues: instead of moving to a different space altogether, the trigger to get in the zone for the next task could be something as simple as always fixing yourself a cup of wonderful-smelling tea before settling in to do some creative writing. Little ritualistic gestures like this or, say, lighting a certain candle every time you go to do a particular task, can shift the energy of the space and prepare you mentally.

Conclusion

You deserve to have control over your destiny to the best of your ability in the uncertain circumstances of self-employment. And there are many uncertainties, every day, all the time. If you embrace the concept of your self-employed life being an ecosystem; take action on the business and personal development strategies shared here; fight back against the inclination to compartmentalize your life; stop listening to a traditional-thinking world telling you to focus on one thing; and know that it's OK to take it all personally because it is personal, you will control your destiny. You deserve that.

The Self-Employed Ecosystem is the formula for your self-employed success. Creating the environment for what you want to happen and trusting that it will come to be is the answer to almost everything in life.



How many people can say they've never worked for anyone else? Selling eggs door-to-door at fourteen years of age began a lifetime of self-employment. Now, as an experienced speaker and small-business consultant, **Jeffrey Shaw** helps self-employed and small-business owners gain control of their business in what otherwise seems like uncontrollable circumstances. Drawing on his expertise as a renowned portrait photographer, Jeffrey shows business owners how to view business through a different lens and offers proven strategies for arranging the often chaotic pieces of life and business into a composition of sustainable success.

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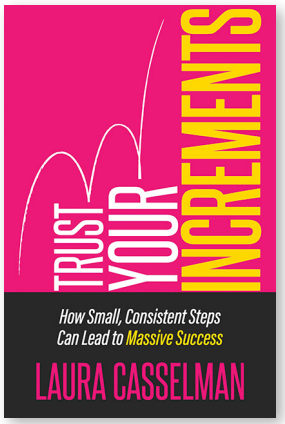
Trust Your Increments

Laura Casselman

soundview
Executive Book Summaries®

Trust Your Increments

How Small, Consistent Steps Can Lead to Massive Success



by **Laura Casselman**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Leading is far from easy, especially when you're a woman in business. But once you're armed with your confidence, the world is your oyster.

Trust Your Increments: How Small, Consistent Steps Can Lead to Massive Success overflows with growth systems and wisdom that has the potential to change the way women approach things in business. The book details fifteen small and incremental steps you can take to climb the corporate ladder without compromising your personal values.

By painting the book with colorful real-life stories about climbing the ladder of male-dominated corporate America, author Laura Casselman offers an honest and entertaining perspective on being a female leader. She challenges us to put our focus on what matters to us the most, maximizing our potential, and hitting ambitious career goals by taking little, but consistent steps toward success.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to be confident and never apologize for it.
- How to take care of your reputation and image.
- How to run a successful business.
- How to know your value and shine by doing what you do the best.

Introduction

Success doesn't come easy but when you're armed with the right weapons, you begin to get closer to your destination with every passing day. Sure, sexism does exist. In fact, it's quite rampant. As a woman, you might get paid less than your male counterparts, you might even experience the "innocent" office banter that's nothing but poorly disguised sexism. Of course, all this needs to be changed, and thankfully, we're already moving toward a better and fairer future for women, people of color, and good people in general. Trust Your Increments will empower you with the tools you need to reach the top without having to compromise your values.

Chapter 1: I Like Myself

This might sound like a no-brainer, but confidence is everything we look to achieve in our life. It plays the biggest part in your success. But being confident doesn't mean being infallible. Life has a way of humbling us and it's just a matter of how you handle the tricks your mind plays and quieten those nagging voices.

Remember, wherever you are and whatever you're doing, there should somebody better than you. After all, how would you learn if you were the best in the room?

When it comes to being on top of your game, the first thing to do is to find what you're good at and double down on that. When you're on this journey, stop worrying about what everyone else is doing. The only person you're in competition with is yourself – the "you" of yesterday, last week, last year, ten years ago.

When you're confident, some people are going to bristle at your sheer audacity in refusing to second-guess yourself. But there will also be some people who will encourage you to be, well, you. As always, it's a matter of surrounding yourself with the right people.

The line between confidence and misplaced arrogance can sometimes appear to be a thin one, but it's hugely important to learn how to stay on the right side of it.

Chapter 2: No, I'm Not Your Equal!

Here's something both men and women must understand – speaking for women is NOT synonymous with speaking against men. Regardless of factors like gender, race, and sexual orientation, everyone deserves to have a fulfilling life and must be paid the same for doing the same job.

Sadly, we're still two hundred behind equal pay for women. Think about it, many women almost have their careers ended just by something as natural yet powerful as pregnancy! The tech industry is mainly male-dominated even today and women in all positions are stereotyped endlessly. When you're on a journey towards success, make sure you know your worth and stop giving discounts. If you think you deserve that raise, don't hesitate to raise your voice about it confidently.

Chapter 3: Image and Accountability

Succeeding in male-dominated corporate America is no small feat. However, women in positions of power are not always sunshine and rainbows to work with either. The Make Your Seat at the Table movement was an undertaking designed to assure every major American corporation had at least one executive female voice in the boardroom.

Sadly, this came with a massive problem – the movement talked about a seat at the table. Given how women make up 50 percent of the population, those numbers seemed a little skewed to me. This triggered fierce competition among women. After all, these companies weren't trying to do the right thing, they were just trying to tick a box.

Chapter 4: Be Responsible for Your Own Dang Happiness

Most people neglect happiness, especially in their professional lives. What they don't realize, however, is that it's never been about the remuneration package but about making a difference, helping somebody, and being happy with what you do.

Achieving trumps obtaining. Finding "your happy" that fills you with a sense of purpose, contentment, and fulfillment is better than drowning in work that brings you constant stress.

Learn happiness from hardships. After all, until you're tested – mentally, physically, and emotionally – you'll never know what you're capable of.

Shift the spotlight from a quick fix of joy to long-term happiness. When we don't know what's coming next, achieving balance in our lives can be challenging. But being happy and content is all about striking the right

balance between living in the moment and not making decisions that will enslave our future selves. Finally, don't let fear stand in the way of your happiness.

Chapter 5: Giving an F

The best possible way to be happy is to care about things that matter to you and stop giving an "F" about everything else. You gain nothing from it except unnecessary strain and misery in your life.

If being successful at something is important to you, focus all your energy on that. Success is not defined by comparisons, your co-workers, or friends. It is what you consider to be success that matters. For instance, just because somebody makes more money than you, it doesn't necessarily make them happy. Don't covet what others have, focus on what you want. Instead of seeking acknowledgment elsewhere, be your own cheer squad!

Chapter 6: Know Your Strengths

Learning what we're good at doing, much like learning what we love, begins in childhood. When our strengths make us happy, it takes the petty frustration out of life's more challenging moments. Sadly, so many of us are good at things that make us outright miserable.

Figure out what truly matters to you and use that information to make the trade between what you're good at and can earn a living doing and how much time you can afford to put into what makes you happy.

You're more likely to be happy when you play to your strengths. However, sometimes it's not that simple. If your weaknesses are holding you back, make sure you look at them first. At the very least, learn enough to know whether somebody else is helping or hindering you.

Aside from understanding your own strengths and weaknesses, learn to enjoy other people's strengths. If your friend is an amazing chef, don't hesitate to let her take the lead when you're having dinner together.

As the saying goes, you're old enough to know better and young enough not to care. If you still don't know what you're good at when you're forty-two, it's not an excuse to give up. Remember, you cannot do everything in your business. So, delegate tasks to save your time, health, and happiness.

Chapter 7: Collaboration

Anyone who reaches the summit can sometimes find it tricky to have support. Collaboration with an additional sounding board from outside your company may not seem easy but it can prove highly valuable. After all, when you're based within your company, you'll only know what your business knows.

Guidance and mentorship are arguably the most important aspects of collaboration. Reach out to a mentor who has more experience than you and you'll be surprised to know how many of them would be willing to help.

We all need to work with external companies, suppliers, and clients to achieve what we set out to do. Constructing harmonious working relationships with others is another piece of the puzzle when establishing meaningful collaborations.

Chapter 8: Staying Positive During the Sh** Storm

Here's a bite of truth: when you're the CEO of a company, crises become a regular occurrence. Sometimes, when there's a fire blazing around you, the only option would be to put that fire out. Self-reflection has to wait until that's done.

When this happens, don't think, "Well only half the building is burning down. I'm grateful for the other half that isn't." Instead, make sure you sit down and think about why something happened and what you can do to prevent it from happening again.

Chapter 10: Know Your Value

Women in particular often mistakenly believe that carving out time for themselves to meet their own physical and emotional needs is somehow selfish. This couldn't be any further from the truth. If you don't take care of yourself, you'll be in no condition to take care of anybody else.

Understanding this and taking the time out for yourself is a critical part of knowing and understanding your own value.

Being on the top level can demand insane hours of work, especially if you're absolutely determined to do great things. But does that mean you must sideline your well-being? Absolutely not. The human body isn't like a car that you can replace with a new and better model when it breaks down. The most innovative thinkers and leaders make their health their top priority.

Aside from your body, your brain also needs a little time off now and then. When it fails to get that, decision fatigue comes knocking at your door. Decision fatigue makes you say, "Whatever, do what you want," That is typically when everything can come crashing down.

There are several ways to prevent this. For example, don't email and don't check social media first thing in the morning to avoid a mountain of questions on your plate before you finish your coffee. Delegate what you cannot find the time to do.

Chapter 11: The Power of No

No is a powerful word. Unfortunately, when a woman in business uses the word no, it will invariably send shockwaves through an industry.

There were times earlier in my career that I was uncomfortable with saying no to people. This was most prominent when I was working in sales and I was expected to wine and dine with prospective clients. Eventually, I reached a point where I drew the line. I would be in the office from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm and I was done after that. No is not a four-letter word. It's one syllable that will change your life for the better, one use at a time.

There are also situations when the word no must be used carefully. For example, if you have a great team full of ideas but have something planned ahead for months, your no could be directed in a way that won't shoot down their suggestions in a negative manner.

If somebody you respect gives you a no or you seem to find your path blocked at every turn, there's nothing wrong with respectfully asking why.

Chapter 12: Top 15 Tips for Successfully Running Your Business

Every business is different and faces unique problems. However, these fifteen universal tips can help you overcome common concerns:

- In the beginning, plan for the end. Be it good or bad, nothing lasts forever, and the end of a business relationship can resemble a messy divorce. So, before the beginning of your venture, make sure you've already arranged an exit plan.
- Always know your numbers to ensure your business's cash flow is stable.
- If you don't ask, you'll never receive. Nobody else would look out for your best interests except for you.
- Know your objections and crush them. If your boss is unwilling to give you that raise, get ready to explain why you deserve it.
- Plan an end result and work backward so you always steer a conversation back to the goal you've planned.
- Don't hesitate to say no when you think it's appropriate.
- Pay yourself first – you're the only sure thing.
- Rainy days are coming and investment is your umbrella.
- Apply for awards and win them.
- Fire yourself from jobs that eat up your time and delegate them instead.
- If you've tried something and it's not working, let it go.
- Speak only when you have something to say.
- Your time is your own so manage it well.
- Your network is your net worth.
- Define your boundaries.

Conclusion

We're all on the cusp of great things, but we're not yet here. We all need to play our part in creating a new world order. Even if naysayers and ignorance outnumber us, it's our job to change that. Never apologize for your self-belief and confidence and never accept unequal treatment based on your race, gender, sexual orientation, or anything else. Do what makes you happy and dedicate yourself to it while taking care of your reputation and image. Always know your value and never let anyone take that from you.

I'm doing it, countless women are doing it. Now that the curtain has been pulled away, you can join the revolution too!



An innovative voice in digital marketing, **Laura Casselman** is the CEO of JVZoo.com and co-founder of Vidastreet LLC. She has nearly two decades of hands-on experience in successfully growing sales and revenue, improving customer service, and aggressively controlling expenses in competitive market environments. Her writing has appeared in Inc Magazine, Entrepreneur and SmartInsights. Laura climbed the corporate ladder by mastering the rules of the "Old Boys' Club" and beating them at their own game.

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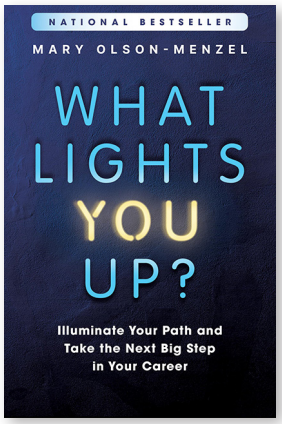
What Lights You Up?

Mary Olson-Menzel

Executive Book Summaries®

What Lights You Up?

Illuminate Your Path and Take the Next Big Step in Your Career



by **Mary Olson-Menzel**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

What if you could change your life for the better, simply by tapping into your own natural resources and being intentional about the direction you want to go now? Through the pages of ***What Lights You Up: Illuminate Your Path and Take the Next Big Step in Your Career***, you will start looking at your life with fresh eyes. By tapping into your own "light source," you can design and follow the path to your next job and a more fulfilling career. Let this book be your guide to your best career. And, most importantly, allow it to ignite your mind, illuminate your spirit, and keep the lights on in your heart.

First and most fundamental, discovering what lights you up is vital. You must learn how to identify and to recognize what this is before sharing it with a potential employer. Because if you can't see it yourself, most likely neither can they. This is where your adventure begins. This book is based on the author's proven methodology, the MVP 360 Pivot Program. Doing what lights you up is of the utmost importance in your career. The world of work will keep changing but that timeless truth is evergreen. At times we are pivoting, sometimes growing, sometimes flowing, and now we are transforming. Welcome to your transformation.

IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY:

- Discover how to use your unique skills and passions to stand out in your career.
- Learn the importance of sharing a compelling narrative that sets you apart.
- Ensure your professional tools are clear, captivating, and aligned with your brand.
- Understand how to connect with others and stay open to new opportunities.

Identify Your Light

Your inner light is your secret sauce. Everyone around you will benefit from your inner light once you truly let it shine. The world of work has forever changed. Your soft skills are as important as your practical skill set, and your inner light illuminates these things and more.

Don't hesitate any longer to find it. Don't shortchange your light for a job like so many have and do. It's your life, and it's important. This is your real business, and your real responsibility, to follow a path that includes doing what you love using your unique skills and attending to the wants, needs, desires, and circumstances you are in right now.

What the world needs now is your special light. Your passion, your purpose, your skills, and your personality will equal your paycheck.

Turn Your Light On

Our great challenge as we grow older is to stay connected to the light in our hearts and to bring that luminous energy into our work. Your unique light is exactly what employers are looking for. Your light is what will set you apart from the rest of the crowd.

Prepare yourself to find and explore your inner light with a physical notebook and pen, leveraging more of your senses than by simply using a computer.

Write Your Story

A resume tells. A story sells. A compelling personal narrative is essential to have as you embark on your journey to find your inner light. It illustrates your background and qualities that make you stand out from the rest, which might just put you over the finish line as the best candidate for a role.

It is a much more effective way to make a personal connection with a potential employer than a resume alone. Start at the beginning and be sure to include your twists and turns. Everyone has them! Remember that every experience led you to where you are today.

Your story is your opportunity to portray who you are, connect with others, and ultimately land the job of your dreams. Even if you are not adept at composition or self-promotion, you can still be successful. Record yourself telling your story, recite it in the mirror, or invite friends to listen as you practice it. Continue to do this until your story rolls off your tongue naturally.

Build Your Toolbox

Now that you've identified your light and your story, it's time to turn your attention to two more assets in your toolbox: your resume and your LinkedIn profile. Your clear and concise resume is your ticket to getting noticed among all the many other candidates out there.

It is often a potential employer's first impression of you and, since it's not considered for more than a few minutes at most, it must be captivating. A single error on your resume can disqualify you from consideration for a job. Weak LinkedIn profiles can also hurt you.

Not only is it necessary to have a LinkedIn profile, but also it's important that you have an impressive one. Before you meet with an executive, you should check their LinkedIn profile to review their professional history, see if you have common connections, and generally learn more about the person with whom you are meeting.

On LinkedIn, your photo, your headline, your summary, your past work experience, and what people are saying about you will all be scrutinized. Take the right steps to make it a good representation of your professional brand.

Follow Your Dream

This is the point in the process in which people typically begin to recognize their value and true strengths that they've had all along. If you're not one of those people, keep going. Don't give up before the magic sets in.

Looking for a new job is difficult enough. You're working toward building your new career and that can be a full-time job in itself, but one that is certainly worth doing. About 70% of the workforce is not fully "lit up" and that should not be you, ever again.

You have permission to usher in a new way of thinking about your career and working. Say yes to what's calling you. The only limit to truly exploring your desires for your future is what you impose on yourself.

Understanding your own needs and non-negotiables in order to make it through every different life stage is necessary during this time of exploration. At each life stage the stakes are different, and so is our need for achieving our highest

You must be open and ready for opportunites in order to succeed.

earning potential. Purpose and passion matter, but so does your need to pay the bills.

Thus, it's important to weigh out each choice carefully based on where you are in life and what you need not only to survive but to thrive.

Tap into Your Network

Genuine compassion in any scenario has the power to light others up. Consider not what's in it for you, but how you can help others. The goal is to rise to even greater success by offering up our skills and talents to work together toward the common goal of success for ourselves and others. We are all better together.

And while many people are living in the reverse, this is just one more thing that can help you stand out among the crowd, enhance your light, and also bring out others' inner light in the process.

If you're looking for a job, make it a goal to check in with at least one person in your network per day. Regularly read your LinkedIn newsfeed. These things will both enhance your network and remind you that you are not alone.

Once you make a habit of this, you'll see that asking for help in the right way is just as powerful as asking "How can I help?" Reciprocal relationships are the goal of building a network and often the people in your network will be the ones to help you find your next position.

Put yourself out there to build your network, even if it feels less than comfortable. Whether or not you love connecting with strangers in your professional life, be confident, authentic, and thoughtful. Always remember to follow up with a note of thanks.

Having meaningful conversations about what the possibilities are is eye-opening and educational. Think of it as a chance not only to gather industry knowledge, but to market yourself and leave a lasting positive impression.

Choose Joy

You must be open to and ready for opportunities in order to succeed. You never know when the next great thing will offer itself to you. If you're walking through life with blinders on, you might not even recognize the opportunity in front of you. Sometimes the opportunity ahead looks more like a detour.

If that's the case, don't be afraid to take it because it could be the opportunity that sets you up for success for the rest of your life. It happens to all of us. Sometimes your light has to dim, and then go on and maybe even off for a time, and that's okay. Continue your journey toward joy. It will all lead to where you are meant to be.

Develop Your Three Ps

Here is where the magic starts to take shape and you begin to design your future and act in a way that will direct you right towards the results that you are looking for.

The first step as you start to think about creating the target list of companies that you are interested in is to keep an open mind and to cast a wide net.The target company list will be divided in your notebook into three categories/ columns, which I call the Three Ps: Prospects, Pivots, and Passions. Each organization on your target list will fall into one of these three categories.

The (Usual) Prospects

Under the usual prospects column, you will list any organization or company that feels like a natural fit for you. This could include a competitor in the same industry, a related space, or even a company where you have worked in the past.

The Pivots

A pivot is a conscious change in strategy to a different industry, a different role, or a complete change into a new field. It does take a little more thought, but it's worth it, especially when you're ready for a change.

The Passions

Under your "passions" column, you will want to include companies that align with your passions or that might enable you to do something that you are truly passionate about.

This target list exercise provides a structure to help you get organized and create a strategic, actionable plan to help you to take the next step in your job search. If you are willing to do the work, the process of rediscovering your light and your passion can be such a magical part of your journey.

You never know where you will end up, and as the process unfolds, suddenly you'll get clarity, and the path forward will become evident. All you have to do is take that first step and trust in the process. Discovering, uncovering, and then focusing on your passions can manifest tremendous opportunities that you haven't even considered.

Shine in the Interview and Land the Job

Sometimes it's hard for people to sell themselves in an interview. If that's the case for you, own who you are and remember that your unique gifts will make the world a better place. It's important that you refine your interview skills before getting started.

Recruiters and hiring managers are very busy and often have limited time to conduct interviews. It's up to you to spend time practicing so that you can impress them in no time at all. In fact, if your light is bright enough, it can wake up even the most stressed-out recruiter and might even just illuminate them in the process, too.

Prepare for interviews. Practice in the mirror or ask friends to do mock interviews with you. The more practice you can get, the better! Study the company or person conducting the interview. Ensure that you know as much as possible about them before you sit down to speak with them.

Be prepared to tell your story that you worked so hard to create. Interviews can sometimes have unconventional questions that you can't necessarily be prepared to answer. The power of the pause and quiet confidence go a long way. Perfect the art of these in preparation for your interviews and you will not regret it.

Succeed Today

Keep the positive momentum that you started and onboard with confidence. Be intentional about optimizing your experience as an employee. The first few months of your new job are critical to your success at your new company.

If they don't offer a proper onboarding program, then create it for yourself. Consult with your new manager or HR to make sure you're getting what you need to be successful. It's up to you to take your potential for success into your own hands.

Decades of data and experience show that good onboarding procedures help position both you and the organization for long-term success. If you're responsible for your own onboarding, get meetings on the calendar with your new manager for regular check-ins.

Study the org charts and bios of those with whom you will be meeting and working. Clarify training, fill out paperwork, and ensure that your technology is all set up and ready. Beyond that, build out your own 30/60/90-day plan designed to set you up for success in your new role. You've got this!

Create Forward Momentum

Always have a plan and a vision for the future: Where do you go from here? What are you doing, outside of your job, to develop yourself and keep growing? How can you support your work with real data to get recognized and promoted?

This is an important place to reflect on how you can keep your light on and bloom where you're planted.

Development can be inspired by many things. It can be self-driven, company-driven, or a combination of both. Take initiative and ask your manager how you can grow in your role and always keep an eye out for opportunities yourself. Be your own advocate and look for opportunities for growth in creative ways.

Online forums, professional seminars, and adult education programs are widely available options to take charge of your own development. If a promotion or different role within an organization is the type of development you have your eye on, there are plenty of ways to spotlight yourself at work.

Get involved with teams in the workplace and work-related clubs. Be proactive to make your boss and department look good. Find a mentor and look for ways to mentor others when you have the opportunity and help where you can. Remember, your networking doesn't stop when you get the job. Always be connecting!

Now it's time to focus on the success you create and your future planning where you are right now.

Design a Framework for Success

Now it's time for you to focus on the success you create and your future planning where you are right now. Write out your goals for your work at your new company.

There are no wrong answers; don't second-guess yourself. This is for your eyes only. You have done the hard work and know you are headed in the right direction, so be intentional about what happens next.

Take a leadership inventory by designing your "leadership signature." In this exercise, you'll align your north star, mission, goal, value proposition, promise, and mantra to set up a framework for success.

You can also complete the MVP-SPARK "Mad Libs" exercise to get your creative juices flowing. These exercises will surely help to build your strategy and future planning. They can even help your team to do the same. Cheers to your success!

Give Yourself Grace

If at any time, you start to feel stuck in this process, stay calm and begin to create another plan. We all get stuck sometimes. You have the tools you need to start over in this process, if necessary. And there are plenty of things you can do for support as you navigate this time. Keep your light on with a side hustle.

Let's say you took what you thought was the job of your dreams, but it turned out it wasn't. Or perhaps since taking the job, you've discovered something that lights you up even brighter. Pivoting big may not be an option at the moment.

Sometimes the job you need to keep the lights on in your house doesn't quite light you up inside. If that's you, this is the time to look for other ways to keep your light on. This is when a side hustle becomes so important. A side hustle can be an alternative job to help you live your passions and make some extra money, or it can be used as a step along the way on your career path journey.

Sometimes it can be a way to dip your toe into something new before you make that giant leap. And sometimes it's exactly what you need to set the stage for your future and what's next. It takes the pressure off having the perfect job right now and gives you the purpose to start working on a plan for what could be next for you.

Nurturing yourself at work and at home by practicing reflection and gratitude inspires you and your team to contribute to better results and greater overall success. You are doing great!

Practice Gratitude

Gratitude is a choice. It may not be immediately clear, but in hindsight, there will be moments of understanding and acknowledgment. Take time to pause and embrace where you are at this moment. Find a reason to be grateful and memorialize it in your notebook. Don't stop finding reasons for gratitude.

Sometimes the Universe gives us tough decisions to clear the path for something even better. It's both the little, less obvious things as well as the big things like your accomplishments that matter.

Take a deep breath and start to pay attention to the beauty around you at home and at work. Once you start to notice the simple beauty in the moments, your life will transform.

You'll start to see goodness in places you might never have imagined. Embrace the goodness in the moments and appreciate that you are building the life of your dreams — right here, right now!

Conclusion: Lights on for Life

Pay attention to your light. What is happening to your spark? Is it shining bright, just flickering, or starting to dim? Let your light be your guide to what is working for you in your life and in your daily work.

How are you feeling about your work? Are you enjoying it?

What can you do to keep that light on? What can you do to continue to bring joy and purpose to your days on a regular basis? Take a long deep breath, exhale, and relax deeply into a job well done. And then keep going.

This is your life and you are on a journey that can keep getting better for you with intention and an ongoing strategy. Keep a vision for your future and keep striving for the life that you want.

Keep dreaming—what comes next for you is in your hands, and remember Zig Ziglar's words: "If you can dream it, you can achieve it." Keep that mantra and any others that speak to your soul in your head as much as possible.

Keep striving to be the best you can be. Keep learning and staying curious. Enjoy and celebrate the moments—the big, the little, and even the mundane. They're all gifts if you choose to look at it that way.

Stay present in the moment and in your work. Create more and more joy by paying attention to the work you are doing and keep doing it with passion and enthusiasm. This is your life, and you get to enjoy it to the fullest. As you should.



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From ***What Lights You Up?: Illuminate Your Path and Take the Next Big Step in Your Career*** by Mary Olson-Menzel. Copyright © 2024 John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Summarized by permission of the Publisher, John Wiley & Sons, Inc ISBN 978-1394267026. Summary published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries®. Copyright 2024 Soundview, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited. For permissions and reprints, please contact service@summary.com. 4701

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Work How You Are Wired

William Vanderbloemen

Executive Book Summaries®

Work How You Are Wired

12 Data-Driven Steps to Finding a Job You Love



by **William Vanderbloemen**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

In ***How You Are Wired: 12 Data-Driven Steps to Finding a Job You Love***, author William Vanderbloemen argues that workplace unhappiness stems less from industry or employer and more from misalignment between a role and a person's natural wiring. Citing research, he outlines the common culprits: toxic culture, bad management, poor work-life balance, inadequate pay, limited advancement, and lack of purpose. He also frames happiness as a public-health matter, noting that nations with robust social support report higher well-being.

Vanderbloemen identifies six factors that boost life satisfaction and translates them into six workplace keys, then presents a data-driven method for fit. These inputs map to twelve traits from *Be the Unicorn* and provide playbooks so readers align tasks with strengths, minimize frustration zones, and design careers that sustain energy, performance, and satisfaction.

IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY, YOU WILL:

- Understand why misalignment between your role and your natural wiring is the hidden cause of burnout, dissatisfaction, and underperformance.
- Explore the six key factors that drive true happiness at work and in life.
- Learn how thousands of data points reveal which environments best match your strengths.
- Discover twelve "Unicorn traits" and how recognizing your strongest ones can guide better career decisions, collaboration, and workplace fulfillment.

(Almost) Everyone Hates Their Job

The stats vary when it comes to the percentage of people who hate their job. Reports vary from as high as 70 percent and as low as 39 percent. A report from Gallup, "State of the Global Workplace: 2024," found that 62 percent of people were disengaged and emotionally detached at work, and 15 percent described themselves as "miserable."

Most concerning is the number of younger workers who are unhappy. Yes, it takes a while to find one's footing, but the numbers don't look promising for twentysomethings. A Pew Research study done in 2023 found 56 percent of workers under thirty were not satisfied with their jobs. Close behind, 49 percent of people between ages thirty and forty-nine aren't particularly happy either.

Twenty-five is a long way from retirement age. Heck, even forty-nine is far enough out. When you've got that many more years ahead, it's worth taking the time to find work that makes you happy.

While we've all met a few people over the years who didn't seem to need a reason to hate their job, research shows there are some common factors that translate to being unhappy at work.

Six common reasons people hate their job:

1. Toxic work environment
2. Bad management
3. Lack of work-life balance
4. Bad pay
5. Lack of opportunity for advancement
6. Lack of purpose

Careers are requiring more of us than ever. Older generations could leave work at work. They didn't have computers, much less cell phones with pinging reminders of work email coming through at all hours. As soon as the office was in the rearview mirror, they could think about other things: hobbies, evening plans, the Manhattan that was waiting for them at home. Forty is a lot of hours, but if those hours stay at work, it's less devastating to spend them unhappily.

If you're going to have to work—and most of us do—you're going to have to like it. Life is far too short to have so much of it dominated by unhappiness or discontent.

Come On, Get Happy

Happiness at work does not necessarily mean you're going to be happier in the rest of your life, but it's a key indicator that it will. Likewise, being happy at home can greatly increase your likelihood of being happy at work. The two are intertwined.

Happiness at work is a matter of public health. It's simply in everyone's best interest for people to be happier.

What Makes You Happy

Six Factors That Contribute To Happiness

1. Positive connections
2. Being thankful
3. Good health
4. Resilience and perspective
5. Learning
6. Purpose

What contributes to a person's happiness at work?

Six Keys to Being Happy at Work

1. Having a good boss
2. Work-life balance
3. Making enough money
4. Autonomy and flexibility
5. Professional growth
6. Meaningful work

No great shock that the list of why people are happy in their jobs is pretty much the inverse of why people hate their jobs. And it's also no coincidence that there's 50 percent overlap between what makes a person happy in general and what makes a person happy at work. Positive connections, continuous learning, and a sense of purpose are good for your mental health no matter where you are.

The Methodology

Now that happiness has been covered, it's time for application. Thousands of people were surveyed to find:

- How happy people were at work—the survey looked at both happy and unhappy people
- Their Enneagram, Vander Index, and DiSC personality test scores

Happiness at work is a matter of public health. It's simply in everyone's best interest for people to be happier.

- Where their personality caused points of friction or flow at work; which traits caused them to be especially happy or particularly miserable
- How long they've been in a particular field
- Their favorite subjects in school
- What their ideal job looks like

Using all these data points, clear trends helped identify which jobs worked best for each of the twelve Unicorn traits discovered in *Be the Unicorn*. **The traits are fast, authentic, agile, solver, anticipator, prepared, self-aware, curious, connected, likable, productive, and purpose-driven**. Knowing where you excel among the twelve traits helps you better understand the circumstances under which you might be happiest.

Swift Success: Finding Happiness as the Fast

Paralysis by analysis or being overwhelmed by other aspects of life stop too many otherwise solid leaders and bright thinkers in their paths. But this isn't so for the Fast, the first trait tackled in Be the Unicorn.

Nothing gets past the Fast. Noticing things others don't is part of what makes them successful and happy. The Fast Unicorns share two essential traits: attentive and decisive.

One of the key elements that contribute to the happiness of our Fast Unicorns is the ability to stay constantly engaged. They thrive in environments that demand quick decision-making and high levels of attentiveness.

Another factor that plays a significant role in Fast Unicorn job satisfaction is the sense of accomplishment that comes from making prompt decisions and seeing immediate results.

Careers where the Fast work best:

- Stockbroker
- ER/trauma surgeon
- Track star
- Emergency vet
- Police officer
- Gamer
- Auctioneer
- House flipper / Realtor
- Personal assistant
- Executive assistant
- Trial lawyer
- Crisis response
- Television producer
- Triage nurse
- Emergency medical technician (EMT)
- Water ski team member
- Jamaican bobsled team member
- Professor/archaeologist turned protector of antiquities

Because of their efficiency and adaptability, the Fast often find themselves frustrated by certain workplace dynamics that others cope just fine with. They don't like to wait for others to catch up. Workplace environments that lack clear priorities are a constant source of irritation for the Fast.

Getting Real: Finding Happiness as an Authentic Person

If you're an Authentic person yourself, you know you have an uncanny ability to connect with people in a way that can completely disarm them.

Not all Authentic people are happy. But the Unicorns who have been studied who are strongest in authenticity and are happy at work share three micro traits.

Honesty: Authentic Unicorns know they're not always going to make people happy. Their honesty can sometimes be off-putting. But the happiest Unicorns know how to be honest and kind at the same time.

Originality: Most of the happiest Authentic Unicorns initially struggled with their authenticity, but the successful ones have learned to embrace it.

Transparency: When people see that you don't cover up mistakes or hide from your flaws, you'll go further.

You've never felt a strong urge to fit in, if you're authentic. You're an individualist through and through. You can cry and laugh in the same breath because you know your feelings are part of the true you. You're the first one to speak up against something you don't think is right and the first one to apologize.

You're authentic, and you just want everyone to feel as at peace with themselves as you do.

Consider these careers if you're Authentic:

- Artist
- Designer
- Chef
- Artisan
- Guide
- Welder
- Plumber
- Electrician
- Carpenter
- Clergy person
- Sommelier

At this point you know yourself and the factors that will make you happy at work. You are a naturally happy person because you don't spend time and energy being something you're not. Don't lose sight of yourself, no matter how bad it gets.

Deftly Finding Happiness as an Agile Person

For the Agile, the next step doesn't take any thought at all. It's automatic.

The happiest Agile Unicorns share two micro traits:

Resilience: The cornerstone of agility. You can't be agile if you're stuck on the last thing that didn't go your way. Or, as Taylor Swift put it, "Down bad crying at the gym."

Growth mindset: The Agile view roadblocks as opportunities to learn. They adapt easily, thanks to a growth mindset. They're open to new ideas and are more willing to take risks.

Part of being Agile and happy is knowing your circumstances so you can know what your resources and limitations are. The Agile can handle just about anything, but they prefer to have some ground rules.

Consider these careers if you're Agile:

- Residential plumber/electrician
- Entrepreneur
- Security
- Copywriter
- Construction
- Architect
- Trapeze artist
- Bounty hunter
- Pilot
- Air traffic control
- Mechanic
- Seamstress/tailor
- Hospitality
- Concierge
- Cakemaker
- Event planner
- Consultant
- Engineer

When the tasks and projects they engage in resonate with their values and passions, it ignites a deeper level of commitment and enthusiasm for an Agile person.

Figuring Out the Key to Happiness as a Solver

The happiest working Solver Unicorns shared three micro traits: imagination, patience, and discernment.

Imagination: The Solver knows that they need to think bigger to find the best solutions.

Patience: Sometimes you get a light bulb moment, and the solution comes to you instantly. More often, it takes patience.

Discernment: Often, the most important part of solving a problem is figuring out what the problem actually is—and if it's really a problem.

If you're a Solver, you get frustrated by small-minded people. You can't tolerate "that's the way we've always done it" as a reason for doing anything. You need a job that will fulfill your need to sink your teeth into a problem and work it all out.

You are a naturally happy person because you don't spend time and energy being something you're not. Don't lose sight of yourself, no matter how bad it gets.

Consider these careers if you're a Solver:

- IT developer
- Programmer/Coder
- Firefighter
- Marketing/PR
- Financial analysis
- Orthodontist
- Analyst
- Therapist
- Engineer
- Consultant
- Agent
- Coach, any kind of coach
- Diplomat
- Plastic surgeon
- Systems engineer
- Eldest daughter

Anticipating Great Things: Happiness as an Anticipator

Anticipators share one strong micro trait that helps them see the future—whether five seconds or five years from now.

Micro traits of the anticipators include thinking things through.

Unicorn Anticipators have some pretty big-deal jobs. The stakes are high for them. They need to anticipate before the "do" because the "do" is so extreme. It could mean whether or not millions of dollars in research and development pay off, or the difference between life and death.

The happiest Anticipator Unicorns are ones with clear goals and unlimited freedom to find the best ways of achieving those goals.

Careers where Anticipators thrive:

- Architect
- Engineer
- Executive assistant
- Fashion buyer/designer
- Trauma surgeon
- Concierge
- Logistics specialist
- Pilot
- Event planner
- Production stage manager
- Project manager

Anticipators are always thinking at least one step ahead, so it's important that they see the six workplace happiness factors present in their work. If not, chances are they're already halfway out the door.

Prepared for Happiness at Work

Prepared Unicorns are ready to respond to unexpected opportunities and challenges with confidence and resilience. At work, this takes the form of being proactive rather than reactive and being able to turn obstacles into stepping stones toward success.

The micro traits of the happiest and most successful Prepared Unicorns are proactive, imagination, and meticulous.

For someone who is Prepared, happiness at work is the culmination of foresight, planning, and a proactive approach to their responsibilities.

Prepared Unicorns excel in various roles that require meticulous organization and readiness. Their happiness comes from the confidence in their ability to handle tasks efficiently, the fulfillment of seeing their efforts result in positive outcomes, and the peace of mind knowing they are always a step ahead.

If you're a prepared person, consider these careers:

- Day care worker
- Nurse
- Teacher
- Wedding planner

- Tax accountant
- Patent attorney
- Judge
- Choir director / orchestra conductor
- Dentist
- Truck driver
- Home repair / handyman
- Skilled tradesperson
- Cosmetologist / makeup artist
- Reporter

As a prepared person, you'll be ready when the right opportunity comes along. Keep your eyes and ears open and take your chances when you get them.

Tuning In to Happiness When You're Self-Aware

Being self-aware is kind of a mind-bender.

The happiest Self-Aware people share two key micro traits. They're observant and sensitive.

Observant. Being observant allows the Self-Aware to pick up on subtle cues and details in their environment. This heightened awareness can help them understand the needs and emotions of those around them, making them more effective in their interactions.

Sensitive. They know whether to push or give space when someone is avoiding eye contact. They know by the way their boss sat down at their desk if they're in a good or bad mood.

The happiest Self-Aware Unicorns thrive in jobs where they know their self-awareness is guiding them in the right direction.

At the same time, the Self-Aware can be almost too aware, so it's best when they're in steady environments that aren't liable to change too much.

The Self-Aware can be successful in any position. They're chameleons that way, but some positions will make them happier than others.

Consider these top careers for the Self-Aware:

- Life coach
- Yoga instructor
- Social worker
- Actor
- Model
- Human resources
- Sales
- Mediator
- Classical musician
- Consultant
- Project manager
- Hostage negotiator

The Curious and Curiouser at Work

Some people just know that everything's going to be okay. They don't know how, but they know it's all going to work out. And along the way, they're going to see everything, learn everything, and do everything they can. That's the Curious person.

Micro traits of the Curious include; they ask questions, they love learning and are genuinely interested, they pay close attention.

When you've got above-average curiosity, you thrive on the unknown, spontaneity, and that childlike sense of wonder people find either endearing or annoying. You need a job with questions to answer, opportunities to get your hands dirty, plenty of space to learn and explore new topics, and a team of like-minded people.

Consider these careers if you're one of the Curious:

- Journalist
- Scientist
- Researcher
- Archaeologist
- Museum curator
- Art historian
- Zoologist
- Explorer
- Marine biologist
- Geologist
- Software developer / IT person
- Astronaut
- Detective

Curious people are remarkably resilient. You can make almost any subject interesting, and you can find value in even the most mundane tasks.

When you've got above-average curiosity, you thrive on the unknown, spontaneity, and that childlike sense of wonder people find either endearing or annoying.

Connecting with Happiness

Being Connected is one of the best things you can do for yourself.

Your empathy and ability to pick up on other people's energy is a blessing and a curse, but lucky for everyone you interact with, it's always a blessing for them.

Being Connected allows you to build and maintain relationships with a variety of individuals in a variety of professions and positions. It's no different from having a diverse stock portfolio. Being Connected pays off.

The happiest Connected Unicorns share two important micro traits. They're strategic, and they've got the memory of an elephant (or an equally robust system to make it seem like they do).

Strategic. The Connected can network with anyone, but equally important is their ability to discern whom to connect with. Determining which leads are worth pursuing and which relationships are worth pouring into takes a level of strategy that others may not have.

Memory. Mind like a steel trap (or a good way to take notes). The Connected know that having a good memory is invaluable when it comes to forging and maintaining meaningful relationships.

Consider these careers if you're Connected:

- Publicist
- Sales associate
- Recruiter
- Community manager
- Lobbyist
- Politician
- Fundraiser
- Hairstylist
- Agent
- Entrepreneur
- Contractor

You're charming, you're great with names, and you know a guy or gal for every job. Everyone in town knows your name. If you wanted to, you could successfully run for school board tomorrow.

Don't let bad circumstances dim your light and the goodness that you bring to the world. Other people believe in you, and you should too.

What's Not to Like? Finding Happiness at Work When You're Likable

The happiest Likable Unicorns share three key micro traits. They're thoughtful, inquisitive, and outgoing.

Thoughtful. You can't be Likable if you're not thinking, especially about others.

Inquisitive. Most people like talking about themselves. Ask them questions, and you're off and running.

Outgoing. You can be Likable as an introvert, but you get a lot further when you're an extrovert, sharing your warmth and geniality to any and all.

If you're Likable, you know that the effort you make toward others will come back around for your own benefit. As such, you need a job that will allow for some kind of transaction. You need to be your Likable self, and you need a way for that likability to shine back on you in some way.

Consider these careers if you're Likable:

- Creative director
- Interior designer
- Real estate agent
- Sales director
- Buyer/purchaser
- Life coach
- Banking/investing
- Flight attendant
- Consulting

- Personal shopper
- Motivational coach
- Tour guide
- Entrepreneur

Taking Care of Business: Productive Happiness

The happiest Productive Unicorns reported three traits, over and over again. They are: perfectionism, drive, and organization.

As much effort as Productive Unicorns make to fit the model for what they should look like on the outside, they have brains that work even harder.

If you're Productive, you have no problem starting at the bottom. You know you won't be there long. And once you're in charge, buckle up.

Consider these careers if you're Productive:

- Attorney
- Project manager
- Surgeon
- Business owner
- Architect
- Landscaper
- Consultant
- Investment banker
- Interpreter
- Chef
- Copy editor

You value order, independence, and precision, but lots of people don't. Don't waste your time trying to fit in where you're not appreciated.

The Purpose-Driven at Work

You can lead a rich, full life without achieving self-actualization. But you can make a much bigger impact if you have.

If your strongest trait is Purpose-Driven, you might be on your way to, or already arrived at, self-actualization.

The happiest Purpose-Driven people share three micro traits; selflessness, focus on greater good, and resilience.

Meaningful work is essential to you. And the straighter and shorter the line you can draw between your work and tangible positive impact, the better. When you're Purpose-Driven, you need a problem to solve, the freedom to take action, and a team to work with and benefit from your efforts.

Careers where the Purpose-Driven thrive:

- Guidance counselor
- Lawyer / public defender
- Government official
- Physical therapist
- Server
- Nonprofit director
- Social worker
- Financial planner
- Personal trainer
- Beautician
- Nurse
- Funeral director
- Human resources manager
- Chaplain
- Teacher

Conclusion

You deserve to be happy. You deserve a job you love and a life that fulfills you. Life is short, precious, and fragile. Stop doing what doesn't serve you and to start doing what your heart and brain implore you to do.

We can learn a lot from others, famous and otherwise, who love their jobs and who hate their jobs. But the biggest takeaway here is this: The most important person to learn from is yourself. When you know who you are—truly what makes you you—you can begin to narrow your wide ocean of options and draw that much closer to finding the work you are wired to do.



William Vanderbloemen is the founder and CEO of Vanderbloemen Search Group. He pioneered executive search for faith-based organizations, growing his firm from humble beginnings in 2008 into a global leader in talent. A noted speaker, author, and workplace culture expert, he has conducted more than 3,000 executive searches and 30,000 interviews, uncovering the traits that distinguish effective, fulfilled leaders. He is also the bestselling author of *Be the Unicorn: 12 Data-Driven Habits that Separate the Best Leaders from the Rest*.

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Work-Life Harmony

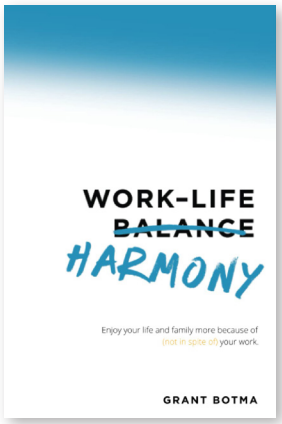
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Work-Life Harmony

Enjoy Your Life and Family More Because of (Not in Spite Of) Your Work



by **Grant Botma**

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Countless people have tried and failed to obtain the ideal 'work-life balance.' But what if that's because we've been seeking the wrong goal? When we're trying to allocate a finite amount of energy between two apparently opposing areas, we're bound to encounter friction, roadblocks, and frustrations. What if there was another way of achieving your goal? What if the answer lies in changing the goal altogether?

Work-Life Harmony is a step-by-step guide to helping you bring harmony between the personal and professional aspects of your life. After all, your work and your personal life aren't two opposite ends of a scale— they're two interwoven aspects of the same whole. As such, they should complement each other. It's not about working less, but rather cultivating harmony, respect, and love between yourself, the people in your life, and your work. When both your life and you work bring you joy, work-life harmony becomes easier to obtain— and you're empowered to live and work with purpose in everything you do.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to make your work and home life complement one another.
- How to stop feeling like your work is pulling you from your life and your life is pulling you from your work.
- How to reframe your personal and career goals to create unified vision and purpose for your life.
- What 'work-life harmony' truly means, and how to obtain it.

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Introduction

We are all created to contribute something to the world.

But it's difficult to keep contributing if we don't believe that the contributions we make are meaningful, impactful, and appreciated. On the other hand, if we stop contributing, it impacts our societies, the financial well-being of our communities, our homes, and the people we provide for.

The saddest part-the part that is just plain wrong-is that if you don't feel like you're contributing and being appreciated for that contribution, it affects your mental well-being.

It impacts the joy and happiness you have in life.

You've likely experienced that feeling, and it sucks. So I want to change that. Not only do I want to help you achieve work-life harmony so you can have better relationships at home and at work, but I want you to have more joy in your life because you see, feel, believe, and understand that the work you're doing is making an impact. It's being fully appreciated by your peers, your team at work, and your family.

When everyone in your life truly appreciates the contributions you make, it makes those contributions and the effort you've made so much more sustainable. You don't feel alone.

And you will add unbelievable amounts of joy and enjoyment to your life.

Purpose

Your purpose is necessary for work-life harmony; you can't have work-life harmony without it. Once you have your purpose, you invite your family, your work, your church, and all the different areas of your life into that purpose. (More on this in Chapter 2!) Where people get messed up, usually when trying to pursue work-life balance, is thinking that different aspects of life have different purposes. Those people try to pursue all of those different purposes all at the same time, attempting to juggle everything at once. They end up back on the balance beam, bouncing from one to the other, attempting to meet all these purposes- and trying not to fall off.

If you don't have a purpose, you have nothing to invite people into—no goal that everybody is on the same page to pursue; no key that everybody in the band is playing together.

However, when you recognize that you have one life with one purpose that everything else is invited into, everything is headed in the same direction.

When you discover your purpose, life becomes simpler. Everything you do in your life needs to point to that purpose. For me, my whole life points to my purpose: loving them.

Create your purpose statement by answering four questions:

- What problems are in the world?
- What do you want to do about it?
- Who are you going to serve?
- What outcome are you going to provide?

Make sure your purpose is selfless and simple, so it's easy to invite others into it.

Finally, do a gut check to make sure your purpose feels like you. You have to believe in it so much that you are willing to point everything in your life toward that purpose.

Invite Your Family and Your Work Into Your Life Purpose

The people closest to you—your spouse, kids, family, and friends—probably have no idea how hard you work or how good you are at your job. And if that's true, they likely have no idea how much of an impact you make on the people in your community every day.

I want to remove the shame you may have about work. Work is good. It's okay to love what you do and to take pride in your work. Work-life harmony is not about telling you to work less or to stop working.

Work is probably really fulfilling for you, but your spouse and kids may not understand what it is you do all day, so they ask,

"Why don't we go on vacation more often?" Or, "Why don't we go on more dates?" Or even, "I need more time with you."

Without a purpose helping to create harmony, you're not on the same page as your spouse and kids. Your kids, at times, resent you. You end up apologizing to your family: "I'm sorry, guys, I can't do that. I have to go to work." When you leave the house for the day, they say, "Ugh, you have to work again?!"

This is a common conversation in many households, and it leads to countless issues because the family is so discon-

nected from the work being done by other members of the household that the work is seen as not important or not valuable. And when the work you're doing isn't valued by your family, how are you supposed to get the support you need to do that work?

Create and share a work purpose statement with your family by answering four questions:

What is the purpose you're fulfilling every day?

Who are the people you are making an impact on?

What type of impact are you making on them?

How are you making their world a better place?

Connect your work purpose to your family by having intentional conversations about the impact you make, how you change the world through what you do-and how your family is a part of that through their love and support for you. Invite your family into your purpose and live out that purpose through the intentional actions you take every day.

Your Ideal Year

You can get back on the path to work-life harmony, by managing expectations—and the best way to do that is by creating an ideal year calendar.

The ideal year calendar helps set expectations on a big scale.

More than anything, this ideal year calendar is the number one conversation tool or trigger point to have a conversation with your family to let them know why you're going to be busy. "Hey, Daddy's going to be busy because I'm speaking at this event in the next couple of weeks, and this is an opportunity for me to love people through finances and share with them how we do things at Stewardship. That's thousands of people I get to share and talk with. I'll be really tired and it's going to take a lot of work, so I'm going to need your support during that time. But afterwards, we're going to celebrate together! We're going to celebrate on the beach! And on the way we can talk about all the people we're making an impact on."

This calendar, combined with effective communication, is how you invite your family into your work, your work into your family-and both of those into your overall purpose.

Communication is going to look different for different families, for different people of different ages, and even for different seasons of life. But the principle of making the effort to communicate and manage expectations remains the same. When we don't communicate effectively, expectations go unmet. When we create our calendar, we're communicating what we want our life to look like. We're getting on the same page.

Quarterly, Weekly, and Daily Rhythms

As with music, if we're seeking harmony in our life, we need to have rhythms.

Rhythms are important in daily life because they help us do the important things we all need to do intentionally and often. For example, if you want to drink more water, you might set an alarm reminding you to drink every hour-that's a rhythm. Or you may want to work out more. Just deciding to work out three times a week isn't enough to establish a rhythm, though. A rhythm would be setting a schedule to work out at a specific time every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Yes, the three times a week are built in, but by adding specific days and times, you actually create the rhythm and make it come to life.

What are the things in your life that matter, that are important to you? What do you need to do to help make your purpose come to life? Create rhythms for those things you need to make a priority, in order for you to be at your best to make your purpose come to life.

Rest

You can't have harmony if you're overworked and feeling overwhelmed. This book can't stop you from overworking.

Instead, we're going to talk about rest. Resting can help you recover from feeling overworked. If you're in that place now, where you are overworked and overwhelmed, you likely aren't getting proper rest as part of your rhythms.

Avoid that kind of burnout by teaching you to be proactive about planning for your rest. Don't just drift through your life hoping to get some rest someday (and suffer the consequences when you don't); intentionally design your life to include rest in it.

When you rest, you are able to deal better with busy seasons-and you can even thrive in the midst of them. When you rest consistently, you can get excited and start to look forward to those busy times.

Evaluation

Pursuing purpose is a journey, not a destination. You can never arrive at having perfect work-life harmony. But you can always make the song better. This isn't a class where you get to the end of the semester and then graduate. This is life—your life- and you can always improve.

In fact, any time you think you're doing something perfectly is dangerous. In order to make the biggest impact possible, we need to be constantly improving. We are imperfect and constantly changing, so we need to adjust with those changes and strive to get better. Even if you feel like you did something 100 percent perfectly, you will at the very least need to make adjustments for the changes happening in society and within you in the future.

Understanding that you can learn how to get better, and doing so, is the key to growth. If someone says, "I did it all right," they have zero room for growth. As a result, they'll stay stagnant while everyone else around them who thinks they could do better has the chance to grow.

To evaluate each area of your life, you can ask these four questions:

- What do I need to add?
- What do I need to remove?
- What do I need to do more of?
- What do I need to do less of?

Perform this evaluation at least once per year with your spouse, your children, your work, and on your own. Prior to or during these evaluations, review your ideal year calendar, your rhythms and efficiencies, and your purpose. Celebrate your progress and the wins you make each year with your family, at work, and with anyone whose support contributes to your ongoing success.

Conclusion

We can be amazing parents, partners, spouses, and friends while also being amazing members of a team at work and contributing toward professional goals. When you have a purpose, and you invite your family and your work into that purpose, to work toward living out an ideal year, it will have a positive impact on every aspect of your life. You will be a more connected parent and spouse. You will be more intentional about your rest and evaluate how you're doing, so you're always trying to get better.

When you do that, your household is in a very healthy place—and it has the opportunity to make an impact on other households that aren't as healthy. Maybe you give financially to philanthropic endeavors. Maybe your household is a blessing to other households that are going through a tough time.

In any case, it's possible to bring your work and your life into perfect harmony. All it takes is conscious, consistent, and committed effort.



Grant Botma is a husband, father, and Arizona native who has worked in the personal finance industry since the age of fifteen. He took a stand against financial injustice by forming Stewardship, a group of companies serving his community with wisdom and love through home loans, insurance, and investments. Included twice on the Inc. 5000 list of America's fastest growing companies, Stewardship's success stems from Grant's personal philosophy of harmonizing work and family life. He is a business owner, bestselling author, keynote speaker, and family man who is on a mission to "love others."

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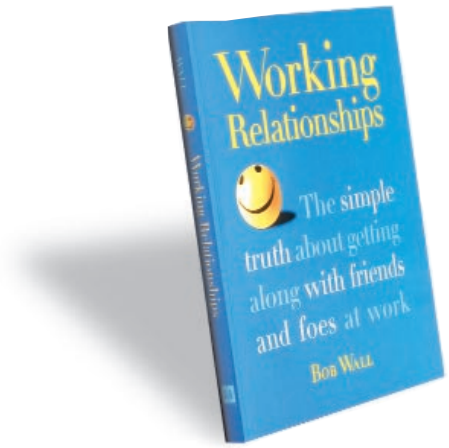
Working Relationships

Bob Wall

Vol. 22, No. 5 (3 parts) Part 3, May 2000
©2000 Soundview Executive Book Summaries* Order # 22-13

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FILE: SUCCESS/CAREER TECHNIQUES



By Bob Wall

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WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

No matter how good you are at what you do, no matter how talented, skilled and knowledgeable you are, the most important and the most frustrating factor in determining your success and satisfaction in the workplace is your ability to forge effective relationships with others. Work is where you spend many of your waking hours, and where many of your most important relationships develop. Managing those relationships effectively is a challenge in any workplace. Helping you meet this challenge is the purpose of this summary.

In the first section of the summary, author Bob Wall explains what he calls "the tangled web of relationships in the workplace." In this section, you will learn the importance of keeping personal and professional relationships separate. You will discover the danger of viewing the workplace as an extension of the rest of your life, as one big happy family. You will also learn the reasons that teamwork often disintegrates, how your behavior may not match your good intentions and how leaders are often the cause of conflict.

In the second section of the summary, you will discover some of the ways to fix what's wrong. You will discover new ways to communicate with your work team. You will learn how emotions disrupt and silence kills — and what you can do about it. With a few simple tools, you will learn teamwork and cooperation, how to gather input on decisions and how to structure conversations. You will also see how problems should be approached, and how your suggestions can become win-win scenarios for everyone.

In the final section of the summary, you will embark on a self-discovery journey as you learn to balance professional and personal relationships in a way that furthers your company's business while satisfying your desire for growth and personal development.

There are no revolutionary theories or methods in this summary — just some common-sense talk about issues that, unaddressed, can undermine the performance and productivity of your employees and your company.

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WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

by Bob Wall

— THE *COMPLETE* SUMMARY

The Tangled Web of Relationships in the Workplace

Every job requires interaction with people. At the very least, we all have a boss to deal with. Most of us also have co-workers with whom we must share resources, coordinate efforts and manage the complications that come from working together. Being able to work effectively is one of the most important factors in determining your success on the job. The simple truth is that being good at what you do simply isn't good enough if you can't work with people.

Technical abilities may get you into management, but it takes interpersonal abilities to keep you there. But promotions aren't the only reason to work on your ability to work well with others. Job satisfaction is another. The quality of your work life affects the rest of your life. Good working relationships can make even the worst job bearable. Think what they can do for a good job!

Friends and Colleagues

Personal relationships at work are important for friendship and mutual support. Think back to a job you held before your current one. You probably remember some people with real affection. But there are probably others you don't miss at all. These were the people you wouldn't have chosen to associate with except that they came with the job.

In effect, there are two types of relationships that develop at work. One is a personal one and the other is professional. The professional relationship is always the most important one. After all, your primary purpose on the job is to accomplish work for your company. To make both personal and professional relationships work, you must recognize the problems that come with mixing work and personal relationships. These trouble areas are:

- Failing to distinguish what is personal from what is professional,
- Failing to realize personal and professional relationships have different purposes, and
- Failing to realize that personal and professional relationships require different communication methods.

A professional relationship exists solely for the purpose of getting work accomplished. Even though you may work with someone you consider a friend, you must keep the work aspects of the relationship profes-

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Identifying Relationships to Improve

Perform this exercise to identify troubled relationships:

- Name two people at work with whom you would like to develop a better relationship.
- Ask yourself what will happen to your job effectiveness and satisfaction if the relationships don't improve.
- If you haven't attempted to address concerns, why not? What is holding you back?

The Myth of the Big, Happy Family

Many business leaders insist that their workplace is just like a big, happy family. They talk at length about the warm family feelings that mark the culture of their organization. They go to great length to help a worker in crisis. Unfortunately, these owners and leaders are unintentionally setting themselves up to be a disappointment to the very people they have strong feelings about. Sooner or later, difficult decisions must be made for the good of the business. These decisions will be inconsistent with the company view that they are all one big, happy family.

You must learn how to set appropriate professional limits to personal relationships at work. If you don't, you will find that serious problems will go unaddressed for fear of disturbing personal relationships and hard decisions will go unmade.

The author: Bob Wall is an organization development and training consultant whose clients have included Cellular One, McDonnell Douglas, Pier One Imports and the U.S. Environmental Agency.

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The Tangled Web of Relationships in the Workplace

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sional. In a professional relationship, your feelings about the other person are irrelevant.

In a personal relationship, there is an assumption of equality. However, in professional relationships, the dynamic is different. Professional relationships are hierarchical. Someone is in charge. Communication among professionals is straightforward, business-focused and has nothing to do with feelings and intimacy. One of the most difficult work situations is managing someone who was a co-worker. Sometimes it simply isn't possible for the personal relationship to survive the promotion. A good manager recognizes that reality and accepts it.

How, then, can you mix personal and professional relationships? It is difficult, but not impossible. First, everyone involved must understand the difference between personal and business relationships. Next, everyone must learn to communicate professionally. Finally, everyone must collaborate to get the job done. ■

When Good Teams Go Bad

Teamwork doesn't come naturally. That's a common myth that permeates the workplace. Many managers assume that if they assemble a team of talented, hard-working, ethical workers and give them the resources needed to accomplish the task, success will follow. Often, it doesn't. And the reason is that few people are trained in communication. Instead, their education focuses on technical proficiency.

Many companies assume that their staff naturally know how to build good working relationships with their co-workers, that they will know how to identify problems and resolve conflicts. The good news is that most of us do pretty well with teamwork most of the time. Unfortunately, there are times when that doesn't happen. Heavy workloads and long hours result in tired, frustrated people who sometimes say things they wouldn't normally say.

There are techniques you can learn to make a team effective. In fact, conflict properly managed can seed growth, creativity and change. It isn't conflict in and of itself that is the problem. A certain amount of conflict is good. It lets members of the team air opposing views and ideas, allowing the group to take advantage of their collective intelligence. But more often, unmanaged conflict simply tears the team apart.

There are two very common explanations for conflict. Both are wrong. Flawed conflict diagnosis # 1 is that the other person's personality is flawed. He or she is "a jerk," "overbearing," "arrogant," "aggressive," "selfish" and otherwise impossible to work with. In other words, the conflict is allegedly caused by a "personality conflict," and the personality at fault is never the speaker's! Flawed conflict diagnosis # 2 is that the other person is "incompetent." He or she lacks the intelligence, ability or training needed to get the work done. Again, the cause of the conflict is the shortcomings of the other party.

Lack of Communication Across Department Lines

Consider what happens when departments don't talk to each other about a common problem. In one case, an insurance company claims department complained that the data entry department was careless when entering claims. As a result, the claims department had to respond to customer complaints about mistakes in the claims process. The claims department blamed the problem on the "jerks and incompetents" in the data entry section. They assumed the data entry clerks didn't care about the problems they were creating.

During one meeting, when the name calling was getting very intense, one young woman in the back of the room raised her hand to speak. She had just transferred from the other department and told the group that simi-

(continued on page 4)

The Problem With Explosive Conflict

When two people conclude that the other is a jerk or is incompetent, the potential for an emotional explosion is great. If one party gets up the nerve to tell the other that he or she has serious personality problems, the result is fairly predictable. The person on the receiving end is going to be defensive. And the conflict escalates from there, getting louder and more bitter. Once unleashed, emotions almost always do more damage to the sender than the receiver.

Silence is Deadly

When teammates discover that open hostility doesn't work, they often go to the other extreme. Instead of dealing with conflict rationally and professionally, they instead bottle up their resentment and anger. But nothing kills relationships more surely than issues left unspoken. As a manager, you must teach your team that issues must be discussed without resorting to explosive behavior.

When Good Teams Go Bad

(continued from page 3)

lar discussions occurred in the data entry department. It turned out that some of the problems were caused by technical problems in the entry system, and not by carelessness or incompetence at all. Both departments wanted to do a good job. Nevertheless, the claims people reduced problems in the data entry section to "carelessness."

Because the employees in one department didn't tell workers in the other department about their frustrations, the real reason for the problems didn't surface until much later. Silence took its toll. It would have been far better if the parties had been able to discuss the problem rationally and calmly much earlier. ■

When Behavior Falls Short Of Good Intentions

All it takes is one person to ruin what might otherwise be a very good job. That person might be your boss or perhaps a co-worker who seems intent on making your life miserable. Or it may be someone who is apparently incapable of making a decision. Learning to work with and understand such problem people may be the most important survival skill you develop.

Consider the following examples. Raoul is a senior vice president in a manufacturing firm. He has a reputation for hard work, long hours and a passionate commitment to serving his customers' needs. In turn, his customers love him. He may well be in line to be the next president of the firm but for one problem: Almost no one on the staff wants to work for him. He has a reputation as a tyrant.

One by one, other employees tell tales of horror. Raoul doesn't ask people to do something; he issues a command. Raoul is quick to anger. One worker described it like this: "He looks angry. His face gets red. I feel like hiding under my desk when I see him coming my way." Raoul also is prone to paging people over the public address system in a tone that let's everyone know there is trouble coming for the person being summoned. The only employees who can work with him manage it by adopting Raoul's aggressive style. The rest avoid him at all cost.

Then there is Josh, a manager in a blue collar environment. Josh is a really nice guy who works hard and is genuinely liked by those around him. He has a deep commitment to the study of leadership. When things are going smoothly, Josh does fine as a manager. But when it comes time for him to actually behave like a leader, he is unable to deliver. He is unable to make a decision, perhaps because he is so eager to please everyone.

Finally, consider Julia, who works in a small bank branch office. This is her first full time job. In the evening, she attends school. She is a member of a small team which is required to work closely together. Although Julia is mastering her job, she is a source of great tension on the team. The others complain that she "has an attitude." She complains about everything and everyone. When asked to do something she doesn't want to do, she sulks and lets everyone know how unhappy she is by her demeanor. As a result, no one wants to ask her for help.

All three individuals are undermining their teams in their own way. The only way to get their teams back on track is to intervene with the problem individuals directly. For example, Raoul has to be told that his leadership style is reminiscent of Attila the Hun. Only then will he have the opportunity to change.

You will almost never run into someone whose basic intentions in the workplace are evil. Most people honestly mean well. They want things to work out for themselves, and their co-workers. It's just that sometimes we all do things that fall short of our good intentions.

Taking Responsibility

You must take personal responsibility for the way things are for you at work and take the appropriate actions to make things happen. Doing so depends on trust. You must be willing to believe that the bad behavior around you is not intentional. And you must be able to risk speaking up. ■

Walking in the Other Person's Shoes

No matter what you may first think, the people who drive you crazy usually have good intentions. Try seeing the world from their vantage point with this exercise. Think about a recent incident involving the person and:

- Objectively describe the incident.
- Write a description of the incident from the other person's point of view.
- How do you think he or she would view the incident?
- What would he or she say about his or her intentions?
- What thoughts, beliefs and attitudes are leading him or her to behave that way?
- What is he or she trying to accomplish?

When You Are Your Own Worst Enemy

Sometimes we are saboteurs of our good intentions. We do not see ourselves very clearly, while we certainly see another person's faults easily. If no one tells us what we are really like, we can labor under the impression that we are reasonable people who are easy to approach for years. Each of us is two people: the person we like to think we are and the "evil twin" people have to work with.

If you are blind to the impact that your behavior has on those around you, if you don't know how serious the impact of your behavior is, you aren't likely to change the behavior on your own. And the person suffering because of your behavior probably thinks you are acting the way you do intentionally. If that's the thought, he or she is unlikely to approach you. After all, if your behavior is intentional, what good would discussing it do?

If you are in a leadership position, you may be doing things that severally affect the morale and performance of your team. But they will be reluctant to point it out. This is the perfect recipe for failed expectations.

Remember Raoul? Raoul didn't see himself as excessively demanding. Instead, he saw himself as setting high standards. He didn't see what an impact his behavior had on his team. Once he did, he made changes. The first was to meet privately with everyone he had publicly berated and offer an apology. And Josh? He saw himself as sensitive and a consensus builder while his team saw him as abdicating decision-making to others. When he realized what he was doing, he elected to step down into a line position rather than step up to the plate and become a decision-maker. And Julia has changed her behavior enough that the team can again work together. ■

The *Real* Problem: A Case Study

The owner of a growing company asked author Bob Wall to give the company's management team training in assertion skills. The owner complained that the managers were not participating in meetings. Instead of offering possible solutions or next steps to address problems on the agenda, managers stayed silent. "I usually wind up doing most of the talking," the owner told Wall. "It is clear to me that they need assertion training."

Wall asked the owner permission to interview the managers before designing the training curriculum. "He was skeptical," Wall says, "but he gave me permission to proceed with the interviews."

As suspected, the interviews with the company's executive staff revealed that the source of the problem was the authoritarian approach of the owner. He focused exclusively on the negative, harshly criticizing managers for any problems but never praising them for successes. He scowled angrily if anyone said something that he didn't agree with. And if a discussion did begin, he would drum his fingers impatiently, as if to say, "Are you finished yet?"

Wall informed the owner of the results of the interviews. Dismayed, the owner realized that he was sending the wrong message to his staff. In an informal meeting with the executive staff, Wall facilitated a candid discussion with the owner about his authoritarianism, impatience and negativity. Guidelines were set for future meetings, including an agenda item at each meeting to celebrate successes. A rotating chair for the meeting was established as well, so that the president did not lead the discussion each time.

Wall remained available if the owner still felt that assertiveness training was necessary. It never was.

Fixing the Relationships That Are Not Working

Whenever problems or conflicts occur when working together, you may immediately start looking for the source of the problems in the personality, character, intentions or capabilities of the other people involved.

Guidelines for Working Together

In order to change how you deal with your working relationships, you need to change how you think about them. You need to take the concept of teamwork to a new level. Do that by bringing some simple and practical guidelines for working together into the workplace, guidelines necessary to build effective working relationships and identify and resolve the breakdowns in teamwork that will always occur.

To build a foundation for effective teamwork, start by agreeing on goals, roles and procedures. Team members should ask themselves:

What goals are we going to accomplish?

What role is expected of every team member?

How will we coordinate our work with each other?

These guidelines will help accurately identify the source of conflicts that occur in teamwork. ■

Why Teams Break Down

The most common source of problems in teamwork is ambiguity. Team members don't always share their goals, roles and procedures with each other. Often, individual team members simply make assumptions about what the team is supposed to accomplish and how they are supposed to do it. For people on a team to work

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Why Teams Break Down

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effectively, each person must understand what is expected of him or her and what other members of the team will be doing to ensure the team achieves its goals.

On the other hand, goals are sometimes clearly defined but leave people overloaded. This sometimes happens when highly motivated people take on too much and begin working long hours. Their strategy works for a while, but eventually the team becomes tired and frustrated. Ask too much from too few for too long and even the most stable teams will show the strain.

You must also assure that there are procedures in place that will enable teams to function. There are two types of procedures you need to put into place: technical and interpersonal. Technical procedures assure essential enterprise functions are carried out. For example, in a hospital, the medication distribution is critical. All shifts have to use the same technical procedures. Other procedures are softer, more personal. These procedures might outline how resources and information are to be shared between team members.

Finally, you must get team members to depersonalize conflicts. Instead, professionalize them. Remind everyone that the cause of team conflict probably isn't personal. Remember that everyone on the team probably means well and has the skills needed to get the job done. ■

Participating In Decision Making

If there is one theme that captured organizational development theory in the last decade, it is the participatory decision making model. W. Edwards Deming originated the movement by calling attention to the idea of continuous quality improvement through expanded employee participation. He devoted his life to helping companies produce higher quality goods and services while realizing astounding cost savings through the reduction of waste, errors and inefficiency.

Deming's contribution centers on his observation about how companies think about organizational problems. He realized that productivity was about more than identifying tasks for workers to do and telling them how to do it. Deming theorized that when there was error, waste or inefficiency in the workplace, there were only two possible causes: the individual worker or the system. He also concluded that a mere 5% of errors, waste and inefficiency was caused by the individual worker, while 95% was the fault of the system. He concluded that asking workers to participate in the management of companies would identify system problems.

The participatory movement is working on breaking down barriers between management and the workers who do the work necessary to build products and deliver services. But a word of caution: the process for participating in decision making needs to be clear. This includes designating a decision maker, identifying those who will be consulted before a decision is made and those who will be informed after.

Who had the "D?"

One of the most important questions to ask on any team is who has the authority and responsibility to make any particular decision, which is commonly referred to as the "D." Usually, only one person on a team has the "D." That person is the "Big D."

You must make sure that there is no ambiguity as to who has the "D." Although it is possible for more than one person to be the decision maker, be aware that the more people who have to agree, the more ambiguity you have tossed into the process. Be sure you define how

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System Errors at Work

A factory foreman wanted to discipline workers who continually made errors loading trucks. He felt they had "an attitude problem." A closer examination of the problem revealed that it was the cumbersome order processing procedure that contributed to the errors, not personal attitude. After the paperwork and procedure for processing orders was simplified, error rates plummeted. It was the system, not the workers, that was the problem.

Forcing Risky Decisions

Avoiding risky decisions can be as dangerous as making them. Consider the case of the president of a small company who sought help because his wife complained he was working longer hours and didn't seem his normal, upbeat self. It seemed that company executives had taken to referring all difficult decisions to the president rather than making them. The result was that the president was overwhelmed with requests for "advice" on what decision to make.

To end the logjam, the president purchased a roll of stickers with a large "D" on them. When an executive asked for "advice" the president slapped a "D" on the memo and sent it back. Soon the executives were forced to make decisions.

Participating In Decision Making

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Steps for Structuring Conversations

- Ask for time.
- Make a brief opening statement.
- If the answer is yes, nail down the agreement details.
- If the answer is no, focus discussion on the issue and impact to persuade the other person.
- Look for a win-win solution.
- End by restating any agreement reached.
- If no agreement is reached, describe your next step, if any.

joint decisions are made. Is it to be by majority vote, or by consensus?

You must make absolutely clear when you are going to retain the "D" and when the other members of the team are to play a pre-decision consulting role. When team members know they are there for input, they stop wasting their time arguing about the decision and instead spend the time trying to influence the decision maker.

Announcing the Decision

Once a decision has been made, it's time to let everyone know what the decision was. You need to create procedures that assure decisions are passed down to all who are affected by them. Today, that may mean distributing information via email or posting it on an internal web site.

Remember, participatory decision making does not mean every decision is reduced to a vote. Rather, it means that everyone whose voice should be heard has an opportunity to provide input. The decision is still likely to be made high up in the company hierarchy. ■

Assessing a Problem's Impact

A manager had insisted that the members of his team not come to work wearing white socks with dark suits. He felt that wearing white socks was a problem. When he thought about the problem, though, he concluded that in the setting his team worked, white socks had no impact whatsoever. The rule reflected his personal preference. Had the team members been in the public eye, the rule might have made sense.

Conversations Dying to Happen

Taking corrective action requires two sets of skills: thinking skills and conversation skills. Up to now you have been developing thinking skills. Next it's time to develop communications skills.

Teamwork comes down to an endless series of conversations about work and how to get things done. Yet many people simply don't engage in the necessary conversations. If your team members aren't talking, there may be a reason, and it may be you. If you think that people are intimidated by your power, take a closer look. It just might be possible that you are not a very pleasant person to work with. Think back to the last time you did communicate with the team. Could it have been an unpleasant experience for them? Some people shut down for a long time if you make them feel stupid or exposed.

To avoid repeating unpleasant conversations, learn the value of thinking before speaking. Remember that few people are able to think clearly in anger. It's easy to think of the perfect thing to say six hours later. But of course, by then it's too late; the damage has been done. Instead, take the time to gather your thoughts before

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Five Years From Now

Perform this exercise to focus where you are and where you are going. Pretend you are a journalist who has just met you five years from now. Write the article she would write about you, and be sure to include:

- Describe yourself in glowing terms.
- Describe your professional success in five years.
- Write about your work relationships. How will others perceive you when they are asked about the future you?
- What will your family life be like?
- What will your health be like? Will you have practiced self-care and have reached the level of wellness you wanted?
- What type of person have you become spiritually?
- What will your social life be like in five years?
- What things have you done that you didn't think you would? Are you involved in community service? When you are done, use the article to focus your self-improvement efforts.

Conversations Dying to Happen

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you act. It's good stress management and also a good career preservation strategy.

There are techniques you can use to begin difficult conversations. The best and most productive conversations follow an outline. First, you must identify the problem. Describe the problem in an objective, nonjudgmental way. You will find that this goes a long way towards reducing resentment and defensiveness.

After you have described the issue in an objective, professional way, you need to describe why this situation concerns you. You need to articulate the problem's impact on yourself and others. You will have to be persuasive, and think about what's in this for the other person. Remember that your personal feelings are irrelevant.

Don't start problem conversations without knowing what you will request in the way of a solution. No one likes complaints. Always bring a specific request, suggestion or solution to the table. Be prepared to list the benefits that go with your solution.

If an issue is important, discussing it deserves attention. And if you are prepared, it's likely you took notes. Should you refer to them during your conversation? Why not? Written notes can make a big difference and are especially important if the issue is complicated. And written notes certainly help keep the discussion on track.

Finally, avoid ultimatums. Give your boss an ultimatum instead of a reasoned suggestion, and the likely result is that you will get an opportunity to polish your job-seeking skills. ■

Making the Good Relationships Better

Up until now, we have focused almost exclusively on building strong professional relationships directed at one thing: getting the job done. Your company needs you and your co-workers to work together and get things done. But none of this diminishes the importance of the *personal* relationships we develop at work.

Deepening Your Relationships

Work gives people the opportunity for human connection. Especially today, we move from house to house, from city to city, from job to job. Many of us live in cities where we don't know the people in the house next door. For many, our closest blood relatives live miles away. But if you are going to spend forty or more hours a week with a group of people, chances are you will make personal connections with some of them.

It is possible to work hard and carry on a professional relationship at work while developing personal relationships with some co-workers. People can disagree openly about professional issues without taking things personally, all the while caring about each other very much. Pulling this off successfully takes discipline and the ability to know what's personal and what's not. But it also takes a conscious effort to build and maintain closer, more personal relationships.

Getting to know people takes the willingness to be known by them. Without self-disclosure, true intimacy is impossible. But be careful; your job is not a support group. Endless public suffering and emotional crises are tiresome and distracting.

Everyone messes up sometimes. Good personal relationships survive these times if the guilty party makes amends. Making amends is not groveling. Instead, it is doing what is necessary to make something right again. Your willingness to make amends builds trust.

Another simple relationship builder is acknowledgment. A simple "Thank you" goes a long way. Think about the many times a co-worker helped you get a project finished on time or a boss gave you the decision-making power you needed to become more effective. Make a point of giving praise when it's due. A personal handwritten note can make all the difference in the world in how others feel about the workplace. ■

Living Up to Your Aspirations

One of the absolute requirements for a full and satisfying life is living life as an expression of personal vision. This includes creating clarity about your destination. Where are you going? Why are you going there? One way to clarify your personal vision is to ask both yourself and others for feedback.

Begin by asking where you are on target. Next, assess who you want to be down the road. Does your vision require you to get additional training or experience? If so, come up with a plan to do that. But while you can self-analyze, you probably will find that you're not very good at identifying flaws. Let someone help you discover your blind spots.

Seek out two or three people for feedback. For the exercise to have any merit, the people you choose must be willing to speak frankly. Come up with questions you would like feedback on. Schedule the conversations in a comfortable place and at a comfortable time. Remind yourself to relax and be casual. Listen. Ask open-ended question that require a detailed response. Don't become defensive. Ask for examples to clarify broad generalizations. And finally, take action on the feedback.